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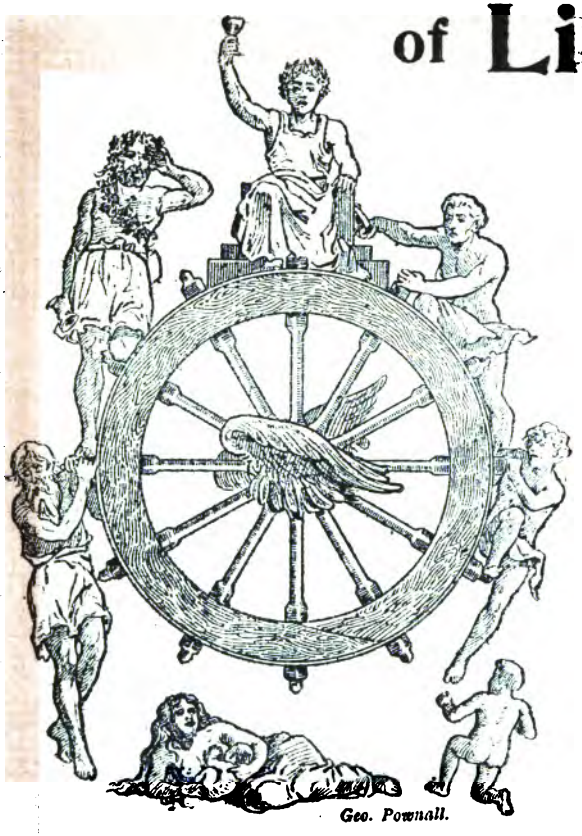

A FEW MEMORIES
AND RECOLLECTIONS

BY

CLEMENT SCOTT.

Clement Scott

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The . . . Wheel of Life . . .

A Few Memories and Recollections

("De Omnibus Rebus")

BY

CLEMENT SCOTT

Author of "Sisters by the Sea," "Poppyland," "Pictures of the World," "From 'The Bells' to 'King Arthur,' "Among the Apple Orchards,' &c.

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I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK

TO

ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS IN JOURNALISM,

TO

JOHN MERRY LE SAGE.

WHERE I HAVE MADE A SLIP HE WILL

CORRECT ME,

AS A CONSCIENTIOUS EDITOR

AND WILL, AS HE HAS SO OFTEN DONE,

FORGIVE MY MANY ERRORS

AS A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

Ernest Bell

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Prefatory Note.

WITH the consent of my friend, Mr. Fred. Horner, the Editor of the *Whitehall Review*, I am able to reprint the first instalment of a few fugitive recollections of a busy Bohemian life in London. Without order, without plan, without preliminary arrangement, these sketches have been dashed off, week after week, at lightning speed, without a single reference to a diary, or annal, or a book.

If the public is pleased with this preliminary canter in the way of Reminiscences of a very busy life, perhaps they will back me when I start seriously upon a more important book which will contain all that I remember of my life, the places I have seen, the difficulties I have combated, contrasted with the tender regard and sympathy that have been extended to me by the men and women I have esteemed and loved.

C. S.

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Old Bailey Memories.

THE old Central Criminal Court in the Old Bailey has once more been the scene of a *cause célèbre*. A trial at the Old Bailey is always an impressive sight. As a rule, the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Under Sheriffs are present on the Bench in full costume, wearing the chains and insignia of their office, taking their seats under the great Sword of Justice. In law courts abroad, a huge crucifix faces the prisoners, but here in England it is the Sword of Justice. At the Central Criminal Court the judge is tucked away in a corner, and does not take the central seat on the Bench, but he brings into court with him every morning a bouquet of fresh flowers, which rests on his desk throughout the sitting, a relic, I presume, of the old custom whereby flowers were scattered about the court, and rue or sweet-smelling herbs in the prisoner's dock, to prevent jail fever.

When the procession of the civic authorities has entered, and these gaily decorated personages have taken their seats on the crimson cushions of the Bench—contrasting so vividly with the misery in the great dock over there, for it is impossible for any human being, however well dressed, to look smart in that ghastly pen—I cast my eyes around the court and try to remember the celebrated cases I have heard tried at the Old Bailey. In all of them there was something dramatic. Here I saw Muller, the German tailor, tried for the murder of Mr. Briggs, a wealthy citizen.

The little foreign "snip" did for Mr. Briggs when he was asleep in a North London train, thus anticipating the Lefroy crime on the Brighton line years after, and the poor old fellow lost his life because he wore a heavy and valuable watch chain which attracted the attention of the impecunious German. Muller was detected, as murderers often are, by some miserable little act of greed. He stole the hat of the murdered man, and instead of throwing it away, he had it cut down to fit his own fair-haired little head. Muller got away as far as New York, but he was arrested on landing, thanks to the telegraph wire, and was brought back for trial. At Bow Street Police Court he was defended with great earnestness and ingenuity by my old friend, Tom Beard, the solicitor, but it was no use. Muller was hanged at Newgate, and to this day there is a doubt if he really confessed or not, since some words he spoke in German may be read either as a confession or a denial of the crime.

Over there in that very dock stood once a venerable old clergyman and renowned schoolmaster of Brixton, the Rev. Mr. Watson, popular and beloved by all his pupils, who, in a fit of passion, killed his old wife, and tried to get rid of her body by packing it up in a huge box, which he intended to despatch abroad. Every influence was used to secure the acquittal of the prisoner by his old pupils. He was saved from the gallows, but he spent the rest of his days in a lunatic asylum. At this same Central Criminal Court I saw a lady tried for a very peculiar form of murder. She destroyed several innocent children at Brighton by distributing poisoned sweetmeats. I think that it was in this case that a jury of matrons was sworn to ascertain if the prisoner was *enceinte*. I know that I was present at the Old Bailey on one occasion when this ancient ceremony took place, the fact that the prisoner was about to become a mother being a bar to execution.

One of the most dramatic trials I ever saw at the Old

Bailey was that of the Scotland Yard detectives and Froggatt, the criminal solicitor. This case also I followed through from Bow Street to the Central Criminal Court, and a most interesting case it was, particularly when young Benson was brought up in his convict's dress to give evidence against the Scotland Yard detectives. Benson was a genius in crime. He took a house down at Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight, was received into the best society, charmed everyone by the grace of his conversation and his charm of singing, and from the Isle of Wight, between his concerts and his penny readings and his church going, he worked the oracle by which hundreds of innocent people were ruined. The scene when the detectives were sentenced was as pathetic as it was dramatic. Great sympathy was shown for the majority of the prisoners, because they were led into it by their superior officers, whom they shielded, and only one of whom escaped punishment. Before sentence was pronounced this lucky one was told to stand back in the dock, and they all had to pass him as they went below after the sentence of condemnation. I shall never forget the look of horror and disgust on their faces when they passed their fortunate pal and chief. As for poor Froggatt, the solicitor, he was taken down howling.

But by far the most celebrated sensation case that I have ever seen in my life, and, of course, at the Old Bailey, was the Penge murder case. In this case, two brothers named Staunton, the wife of Patrick Staunton, and Alice Rhodes, the mistress of the other brother, were tried for the wilful murder of an old woman by inhuman neglect. They shut her up in an outhouse, and tried to get rid of her by semi-starvation and gross inhumanity. It was in this case that the present Sir Edward Clarke first came into prominent notice at the Old Bailey by his brilliant defence of Alice Rhodes, making one of the finest and most impassioned speeches I have ever heard. Montagu

Williams and Douglas Straight were both excellent, but young Edward Clarke was the hero of that occasion, and rose to fame from that instant. There was a desperate struggle on the part of the counsel to reduce the crime from wilful murder to that of manslaughter; but Sir Henry Hawkins, then, as now, the presiding judge, took a very strong view the other way, and summed up dead against the prisoners. His tender heart—for do we not know how he loves dogs and animals?—revolted against cruelty, and with him it was to be wilful murder or an acquittal. He would not hear of manslaughter.

I attended the court officially, for I was appointed to describe the scene at the trial for the *Daily Telegraph*. So great was the excitement that, in order to obtain a convenient seat, I was compelled to attend the court at eight o'clock in the morning, and there I sat in that court without anything to eat or drink until close upon eleven o'clock at night, when all four prisoners were condemned to death in a scene as tragic and dramatic as I have ever witnessed or could ever have conceived. The judge had determined to finish the case that day, no matter how late it might be, and this gave an air of gloom and mystery to the scene. During the brief intervals of the day, when I was penned in and could not get out, I had to listen to the ghoulish conversation of my immediate neighbour, who had a mania for attending murder trials, and had seen every celebrated criminal condemned to death, including the Mannings and Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner, for the last thirty years. He was proud of his record, but he did not make me very cheerful as he described the attitude and demeanour of every condemned man and woman.

As the day closed in and darkness succeeded the light, the scene in court was weird, impressive, and awful. The court was not accustomed to night-sittings, and the feeble, flickering gas had to be supplemented by candles, which dripped, dripped, dripped, as for hour after hour the judge,

in solemn tones, continued his summing-up, which was gradually hastening the four murderers to their doom. Outside we could hear the excited roar of the crowds waiting for the end. Inside the court all was solemn as death, the judge, with the flowers on his desk, the gay costumes of the civic authorities, the earnest faces of the barristers, the attentive, highly-strained jury, and the awful, pinched faces of the two brothers, the wife, and the pretty mistress. The elder Staunton throughout the whole trial gazed into vacancy. Patrick Staunton and his wife sat hand in hand, and outside of all, far away from her pale lover, was the interesting Alice Rhodes.

At last the interminable summing-up was over. The jury retired, and so did the judge. The prisoners were hurried away, and then began that horrible interlude when there is a buzz of conversation in the court, and all present, with nerves momentarily released from tension, discuss, with bated breath, the prospects of the sentence. At last the usher denotes that the jury is about to return. The judge is summoned. The prisoners are ranged, standing, in front of the dock. There is an awful silence, and a pause—"How find you, gentlemen? Is—— guilty or not guilty?" Four times was the word "Guilty" pronounced by the foreman of the jury. And there they stood, the brothers Staunton, the wife, and the little mistress, to be condemned to death. The judge put on his black cap, which is not a black cap at all, but a square black mortar-board. And then followed a scene I am not likely ever to forget. The two women were condemned first, and, before the dread words could be spoken, they both fell back fainting into the arms of the female warders. Before they fainted, however, they gave forth a horrible moan, like that uttered by some tame, wounded animal. The fainting women were carried to the back; and then the brothers, pale as death and shaking as if in an ague, huddled together and hand in hand, heard that they were

to be hanged by the neck until they were dead. In a minute more the dock and the court were empty, and the crowd outside were yelling like wild animals.

Through this yelling crowd I pressed, starved and parched, excited almost to madness, to do my work at the office. So far as I can remember, I wrote over a column of description, just as if it had been a play or tragedy that I had witnessed, and when I had put down my pen after the last line, I nearly did what I have never done in my life—fainted away. It was now past midnight, and I had not broken my fast since seven o'clock in the morning. It was a tremendous tax of strength and endurance.

Then came the reaction in favour of the Penge murderers, who were considered by the public at large to have deserved punishment, and severe punishment—but not death. It may be that my description of the scene had something to do with the public excitement as it had done before, when I wrote an article in the *Daily Telegraph* called "A Ruined Home," which was the means of saving the life of a poor fellow who killed the seducer of his daughter in a moment of temporary madness, but who afterwards committed suicide in prison, an article which, published in the morning in the ordinary issue of the paper, was being sold all over London in penny pamphlet form before nightfall. The curious part of that ruined home story was this, that the girl whose lover had been killed by her own father wanted to kill *me* for taking away the good name of her dead lover. *Quid Fœmina possit!* Here is a fresh illustration of the eccentricity of some women, earnest but illogical to the last; it is a wonderful example of the most marvellous pardon ever extended to a lover, inexpressibly base, by the woman whose ruin he had caused.

But to return to the Penge murder case. Charles Reade, the novelist, took it up in his well-known sledge-hammer fashion, and was backed up bravely by the *Daily Telegraph*. The public voice was not to be denied. Alice

Rhodes, for whom Edward Clarke had pleaded so magnificently, though condemned to death, was absolutely acquitted and set free, a circumstance that can have happened to few human beings. The sentences of the rest were all commuted to penal servitude for life, and I believe they all died in prison. Patrick Staunton was a water-colour artist of some distinction. And so ended the celebrated Penge murder trial.

Poppyland Revisited.

IT must have been over a dozen years ago since I first looked out of a Great Eastern Railway carriage and beheld Cromer on the Sea. I fell in love with Cromer at first sight. How well I remember that lovely July morning which gave to me some of the happiest hours I have ever spent, and memories which no time can destroy! I was in search of a summer resting place, some spot where I could find peace and silence in a restful and secluded farm. I think I can draw a picture of the Cromer that I found those twelve years past. The same fern-covered Light House Hill; the same beacon that shone at night over the pale evening primroses in the dear little Mill House Garden over at Sidestrand; the same fine flint-covered Norfolk Church squeezed into a tiny village of primitive shops; a couple of modest inns, they could scarcely be called hotels; a pier on which nobody walked; about half-a-dozen straggling cottages between Cromer and the ruined ivy-covered church of Overstrand, and only one farm between Overstrand and Sidestrand, where the white gate was opened to me that memorable July morning in 1883 by a smiling girl, and I rested, for the first time, under the shadow of the old mill, which then had sails and made good flour out of the harvest of this peaceful and delicious spot. The Highlands still crowned the hill overlooking my deserted village, and the same lonely tower stood over the "graves of dear women asleep" in "The

Garden of Sleep" which has not as yet "gone down cliff," as the villagers say, though that doom has often been foretold for this now historical tower of silence.

But, dear me! what a change in the Cromer of to-day after this eventful twelve years of its existence! I look again out of the railway carriage window, and I see a transformation indeed. Two at least of my prophecies have come to pass. Over and over again, walking over the Light House Hill from the Mill House to Cromer years ago, I have said, "What a splendid golf ground this would make." Behold the lovely Cromer links of to-day, which are supposed to be amongst the best in all England. Over and over again, standing under the shelter of the Cromer Lighthouse, I have said, "What a grand situation for an hotel on the Swiss plan. Why here you could imagine you were on the Righi, or any summer palace on the Lake of Lucerne, with the advantage of sea instead of lake, and fern instead of pine wood." Behold, recently I was lunching at the splendid sea window of the magnificent Links Hotel on the Cromer sea down, and smoking a post-luncheon cigar, in the full view of the sea, refreshed by the cold breezes up in the topmost turret of perhaps the best, situated hotel in all East Anglia. Indeed, it would be difficult to beat it for situation anywhere. A castle of indolence on the topmost height of a sea-kissed down.

But surely this cannot be the lonely, deserted, and primitive Cromer that I discovered in its days of innocence? Wherever the eye wanders red brick houses, houses belonging to poets, to writers, to statesmen, and politicians appear on the scene. A new railway station out on the Sherringham side, new hotels, grand and vast; new streets, new terraces, wagonettes, donkeychaises, *char-a-bancs*—all the bustle and activity of a fashionable watering-place! They cannot get rid of the fine old church, which has squeezed itself into the village and cannot squeeze itself out, but they have lowered the wall in order to give more space

for the pedestrians and carriages. But if Cromer has changed, if the builder and house-agent have taken possession of this once famous home of rest and quiet, if the delicious and health-giving air has at last been recognized to the full, if capital and enterprise and spirited railway companies have made a new Cromer out of an old one, what shall I say of those sleepy villages surrounding it, once inhabited only by the humble fisher folk who plied their simple trade unknown and unrecognized, and gave one a cheery "good night" or "good morning" on their way from simple village to sea beach?

Look at Overstrand with its seaside villas and little palaces, its mansion for my Lord of Battersea, its gardens and growing timber, its cricket and recreation grounds where once I strolled down a narrow leafy lane to the sea and never met a human being. Here, where I was driven along by the good miller in a humble pony chaise—he is in his shirt sleeves and I smoking a pipe—I find coaches and brakes, and pony traps and bikes, an endless procession, all making their way to Poppyland and the now famous Garden of Sleep, not lonely or deserted now, but swarming with sightseers, and surrounded by gingerbeer stalls and vendors of fruit. The speculative builder has not advanced so far as delightfully secluded Sidestrand. The same dear old farms in the same restful, sleepy hollow. The mill, once such a pleasant feature of the landscape, has lost its sails, poor old dear, but the Mill House remains the same as ever, its garden smothered in roses, the white gate on which I have leaned so many hundred times and "listened to the scented silence" when overdone and overworn with work, still in its accustomed place, and, thank God for it, the same familiar faces to welcome me within this hospitable roof as gave me welcome in the days never to be recovered or forgotten by me. The same charming girl with her sister—no longer a baby playing in the garden—stands under the rose-covered porch, the same

honest old miller extends his rough hand to me and greets me with the dear familiar Norfolk accent which I love so much.

There have been changes, alas, in the village which I shall never cease to love with all my heart. Some of my dear old friends are resting under the turf in the churchyard next to the Highlands; some have wandered forth, but there are many still left to give old friends an affectionate greeting, and to remember those New Year's Eves of long ago, when good fairies came round to every cottage door with tea and blankets and warm clothing for the women, and plenty of baccy and pipes for the men. Yes, the old familar friend is not forgotten at Sidestrand village, and it soon gets round that "the gentleman at the Mill House has come back." Here comes little Maude, the child I used to play with among the poppies and cornfields, crowning her fair head with flowers, grown into a fine young girl just "home from service," and she takes me into her mother's cottage to show me the tea service I once gave her preserved under a glass case, "and not one piece broken, sir," she adds with pride.

They are making great changes up at the Highlands, the one house in all England to which I wanted to retire and claim as my own here to end my days, "if the ship ever came home." But alas, the ship never did come home, and there is no retirement in my destiny, and the lovely Highlands has gone from my gaze, and all my earthly hopes, since it is soon to be occupied by the great landlord here, the deservedly popular Member for Norwich, and I wish him every joy and happiness in the house he will occupy amongst the neighbours and tenants who love him and his family so well. But if the Highlands can never be mine I wonder if one day they will give me a quiet corner in the Garden of Sleep so dear to me, there to enjoy that "long, long rest" that I honestly think I shall have deserved when the time comes. I doubt not that some of the villagers in

Sidestrand would watch over me and think kindly of their old friend. The Garden of Sleep is consecrated. There is no gloom about the place for me. "Oh! no, sir," implores little Maudie, catching at my coat, when I make the suggestion, "In time you would go down cliff." Well, it would not very much matter, Maudie dear, only a change from mother earth to the "Mother and Lover of Men, the Sea" sung of by Algernon Swinburne, when he paced about the old Mill House Garden with the companion of his life, Theodore Watts, or raced with his hat off and his hair flying on the winds, "the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling," along the sands and beach between Sidestrand and Trimingham. Yes, there have been notable visitors under the honest miller's roof. Swinburne and Watts, kindly Harry Pettitt, the genial delightful Dagonet (George R. Sims), who has written much and often about Cromer, the miller and "Louie's blackberry puddings"; Wilson Barrett, and many more who have written dramas and novels and poems, and possibly love letters within the four walls of the old Mill House within sound of the sea.

Reluctantly I tear myself away from these dear familiar scenes. My pockets are empty, for the familar Norfolk cry "*da me largesse*," Latin and French combined in a phrase, is popular at harvest time in these lonely lanes and poppy-covered fields, and there are many old friends, some sick and helpless, to be remembered in the cottages of this still simple village. So I turn my back on the Garden of Sleep, and carry away a bundle of roses from the Mill House Garden, and take farewell of my new friends at the lovely Links Hotel, and make the best of my afternoon way to the health-giving spot I once called "Lazy Lowestoft."

Away we go Lowestoft way on a delicious summer afternoon, passing picture after picture reminiscent of John Constable and Old Crome. The glorious afternoon changes into a still more exquisite evening, and as we pass along in the sunset through the dykes and broads of dear old Nor-

folk, passing wherries and barges, brown sails, chocolate sails, white sails, with a deep background of delicious green, one cannot wonder at the mermaid and merman life led in these Broads every summer by thousands of fishermen, and sailors, and painters, and dreamers, and athletic girls, who are never so happy as when lost on the bosom of these peaceful waters or given up to the sweet contemplation of the rush-framed water ways known as "Broad Land," in picturesque Norfolk. It is a craze, no doubt, this house boat life, this wherry life, this floating barge life of the Norfolk Broads, but as we pass them at the stations, bronzed, healthy, active, in fisher suits, in sailor suits, in yachting suits, it is not surprising that this life of absolute independence has its charm. I for one would sooner be dreaming all the summer on the lovely Norfolk Broads, with their endless variety, than stationed permanently in a house boat on the river Thames.

To-morrow will be Sunday, and I well know that if I stroll down to the harbour in the morning and scan the pleasure yachts there assembled I shall be sure to find my dear old friends, the host and hostess of "The Bell Inn" at Saxmundham, and of the famous "Three Tuns," at Yoxford, the exquisite garden of Suffolk, where many a delightful holiday has been spent by me amidst old-world bowling greens and simple, primitive English village life. It is the custom of these dear old friends of mine to rush away every Saturday to Monday to the sea, and to exchange the cares of business for peace on board ship. It is all a question of temperament. A cosy bed at the "Bell," in pleasant Saxmundham, or a corner room by the garden at Yoxford would be quite good enough for me. That would be my change. But our popular Suffolk friends with their children prefer a quiet Sunday in the harbour at Lowestoft lazing by the sea.

Lowestoft, like all the watering places on the East Coast (thanks to the energy of my good friend Sir W. Birt,

the General Manager of the Great Eastern Railway), is advancing with the times. The distance between London, Cromer, Lowestoft, and Yarmouth has been reduced to the shortest possible space, and the comfort given to summer travellers is undeniable. Courtesy, geniality, friendliness, these are the favourite qualities of all the officials on the G.E.R. The traffic is enormous, but to me it is a positive pleasure to travel on this well-conducted line.

Lowestoft, as all the world knows, boasts an excellent hotel, the Royal, near the busy pier and harbour. Here come Sir Henry Irving, Johnnie Toole and various popular characters, when they are tired or run down, for, I assure you, the air of Lowestoft is a marvellous pick me up ; here come Masonic Societies to banquet and inaugurate ; here come yachting men and sportsmen of all kinds, for the Royal at Lowestoft is well-known and recognised for its old-fashioned hospitality and old English style. That is not much to be wondered at since it is owned by a gentleman known to many of us in the good old port wine days of Wood's Hotel in Furnival's Inn, a model place of the old school, a gentleman who could never quite tear himself away from his beloved Holborn, since he is to this day owner of Ridler's Hotel, next door to Furnival's Inn.

But after a long experience and a study of men and manners, our old friend Mr. Whaley thought that Lowestoft, in addition to the popular Royal, earnestly wanted an hotel of a totally different pattern, not a busy hotel, but a quiet hotel, secluded in a lovely garden ground, an hotel something like the Tregenna Castle Hotel at St. Ives, a kind of peaceful country house by the sea. So this enterprising gentleman bought a lovely estate at Lowestoft, within a stone's throw of the sea, and here he has set up the Grand Hotel, Lowestoft, one of the most charming seaside hotels I have ever entered. Sitting at the edge of the steep, in the sea garden of the Grand, at Lowestoft, you might be miles away from piers and bands, and comic songs and the

usual seaside revelry. Before you is a vast expanse of sea, and every breath you take gives you strength and renewed life. Behind the house is a lovelier garden still, with croquet and tennis lawn, fruit garden, and peach houses, with splendid stables, detached kitchens, and all the details of a fine and well-conducted country house. So far as my observation goes there are two distinct classes who visit the seaside. One class, the Margate class I would call them, find their exhilaration in never ending excitement. They walk about the pier, they flirt and chaff, they go out boating and sailing, they patronize the beach concerts at Yarmouth and Lowestoft, but to them excitement is essential. With other temperaments quiet is more necessary than variety. A little of the seaside fun goes a long way. For them it is pleasant to reflect that having done the seaside in the accustomed manner they can come home to the restfulness and peace of the sea lawns of such a retreat of comfort as the Grand Hotel at Lowestoft.

Here come students and scholars, such as my good friend Henry Arthur Jones, to devour their books and write their plays; here come tired judges and lawyers to rest, and I can assure you the balcony bedrooms and sitting-rooms of the Grand cannot be equalled elsewhere. Of course, the Isle of Thanet air is well known for its health-giving properties, but it should never be forgotten that the renowned air of Margate, Ramsgate, Westgate, and Broadstairs differs very little from the air on the East coast of England. For a man brain-fagged and over-done, fatigued, worried, or depressed, I cannot conceive a more certain cure than to be taken down to the Grand Hotel, Lowestoft, placed in the beautiful sea garden in a Maple's deck chair, and left there to do absolutely nothing until the patient wearies of it. Here you can literally eat the air, and having taken this pick-me-up, then hey for the lobsters, cold beef, pigeon pie, and pickles in the beautiful grand coffee room? I don't myself

believe at all in the annual "washing" recommended in sweltering Swiss or German valleys, where the waters are nasty and the atmosphere depressing. Let others wash themselves inside and out at spas and springs. I have tried them all, and they never did me an atom of good. When my clock has run down give me a day's dawdle and dream on the Cromer cliffs, at lazy Lowestoft, or at happy Hayling. One night in this kind of air makes another man of me. No baths, no spas, or closed in valleys for me. I want the sea or the mountains, East Anglia or "The Righi," the restless waves or the eternal snow.

"Caste" and the old Bohemian Days.

THE Wheel of Life has whirled us round and brought us face to face again with the good old play of *Caste*, written by my dear dead and gone friend, Tom Robertson. I first made the acquaintance of that brilliant genius and best of good fellows, Tom Robertson, with whom I never had one angry word or difference of opinion in all my life, though I criticized every play he ever wrote, excepting a farce called *The Cantab*, his earliest work, I think, produced at the Strand, probably when I was at school at Marlborough. My introduction to Tom Robertson was owing to my close and intimate friendship with Tom Hood, the son of England's poet. Tom Hood, when he left Oxford, where he took his degree at Pembroke College, and when he was tired of editing Cornish newspapers, accepted a clerkship in the War Office, procured for him through the influence of Lady Molesworth, and found me at the opposite desk. He became immensely popular with us all, and delighted us every day with his clever caricatures and sketches, his verses and epigrams, which he rattled off with the greatest ease. It was Tom Hood who first introduced me to light literature and journalism. He was living at the time in lodgings in Grove Place, Brompton Road, and working desperately hard to pay off his Oxford debts. Thackeray and Dickens both befriended the son of an illustrious man. Some of his earliest verses appeared in the very first numbers of the *Cornhill Magazine*, edited by Thackeray. At Grove Place, and at Tom Hood's literary evenings, I met, for the first time, Walter Montgomery, the actor, who had been a commercial traveller for a city firm—Welsh, Margetson and Co., I think—and he fairly astonished us with his declama-

tory power in elocution. He recited, to our delight, a spirited poem, "King Orrey's Ride," written by Martin Tupper, of all men in the world, and Edwin Waugh's pathetic Lancashire Ballad, "Come Whoam to thy Childer an' Me." Here also I met Mortimer Collins, the poet, and the brilliant James Hannay, and many more who, alas! have all passed away.

How times have changed since those days! There were very few clubs, but the clubs that existed, particularly in Bohemia Land, contained some downright good fellows. The picture of the Owls' Club, in Robertson's play of *Society*, is an exact reproduction of what the Savage Club and the Reunion Clubs were in 1860. We really did try to help one another, if not by lending our spare cash, at least by giving one another a hoist up the literary ladder. There was no dog eating dog in those days. We did not sit round the club tables, backbiting, lying and slandering, mauling and maligning, and ridiculing one another's work. We did not shake a man by the hand in the morning, and stab him in the back at night. I think we were loyal comrades in those days. We did not show to one another the kind of paltry jealousy of which no angry woman would be guilty. We rejoiced in one another's success, and quoted the good works of friends; yes and our enemies, if we had them, with pride and admiration. At any rate we preferred to meet at one another's rooms and discuss literature present and past, to compare notes on our favourite authors; to read to one another, to recite, and so on, to the modern custom of turning a club into a laundry of old scandal-mongering washerwomen. The "new cynicism" was not invented then, thank God; but in 1860 Christianity had not died out at public schools or the Universities. Every one believed in something. Faith was not wholly extinct.

It was at Grove Place that Tom Hood suggested, invented, and started a little periodical called *Saturday*

Night. It was about the same size and pattern as the *All the Year Round* of Dickens', or *Chambers' Journal.* The chief contributors were Tom Hood, our editor; a brilliant writer called W. B. Rands, discovered, I think, by Hood; Jeff Prowse, who was at that time writing sparkling leaders for the *Daily Telegraph*, and delightful poems for all the leading magazines; Thomas Archer, a patient, plodding journalist and essayist of a serious and parochial turn of mind; Arthur Sketchley, author of "Mrs. Brown in London" and "Mrs. Brown at the Play," who had been my father's curate; Andrew Halliday, the dramatist; W. S. Gilbert, Tom Robertson, and your humble servant. On *Saturday Night* I earned my first guinea in literature. It was for a review of Arthur Clough's poems! When *Saturday Night* had been successfully started, we agreed to have a Christmas number, following the Charles Dickens' fashion. I never shall forget the night when we all met to read our contributions at the editor's fireside at Grove Place. When the business was over, and pipes were lighted, it was agreed by us all that Tom Robertson's story was infinitely the best. I think it was called "What the Baby's Shoe contained." It was a theatrical, but very pathetic, story, and it contained the oft-quoted phrase, of a theatrical child being "nursed on rose pink and cradled in properties." I know that when Robertson read the story, which he did admirably, there was an audible snuffling about the room. And we shook him by the hand, and prophesied great things of our friend, and when we went away for our holidays we asked him to take up our work in order to help him as he had helped us, and did not, having shaken his hand, go round the corner and call him an over-rated idiot, or an hysterical ass. I think we understood the words "loyalty" and "comradeship."

The success of the *Saturday Night* Christmas number led to others, to which the same friends contributed, viz.:—"A Bunch of Keys," "Rates and Taxes" (where *Caste* was

first sketched out), "The Five Alls," and so on, to the various *Routledge Annuals*, *The Stage Door*, *The Green Room*, and so on.

As Robertson's *Caste* was revived at the Lyceum Theatre on the afternoon of October 24th, 1896, it may be interesting to print the casts of the play as acted in England and America in 1867. In those days English plays were "annexed" in America—strange to say the greatest offender in Robertson's case was W. J. Florence (Bill Florence)—and if Robertson had been paid for his rights as authors are now, he would have been a far richer man than he was.

	Prince of Wales Theatre, London, April 16th, 1867.	Broadway Theatre, New York, Aug., 1867.
Hon. George D'Alroy..	Mr. Fred Younge ..	Mr. J. W. Florence
Captain Hawtree.. ..	„ Sidney Bancroft	„ Owen Marlowe
Eccles	„ George Honey ..	„ W. Davidge
Samuel Gerridge.. ..	„ John Hare ..	„ E. Lamb
Dixon		
Marquise de St. Maur	Miss Sophie Larkin..	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert
Polly Eccles	„ Marie Wilton ..	„ J. W. Florence
Esther Eccles	„ Lydia Foote ..	„ S. F. Chanfrau

Talking of Robertson's plays in America, I may, perhaps, be allowed to correct a little error which has been lately circulated to the effect that on a recent occasion when *Ours* was produced in America, there was, for the first time, an innovation. And the innovation was at the close of the scene that describes the departure of the troops for the Crimea, when, instead of suggesting the passing regiments as Robertson did, they made a realistic military spectacle of the scene. But the innovation, and it was an innovation that Robertson detested, dates very many years back, in fact from the time when Lester Wallack first produced *Ours* in New York, and played Hugh Chalcot with great success. I always considered this effect in Robertson's *Ours*, in which the scene of the excitement is described by looking out of a window, to be admirably dramatic. But it is a very familiar one, and constantly used

by dramatists. It occurred in a romantic play of the Charlemagne period, written by Henri Bornier, called *La fille de Roland*, which I saw at the Français. Here Sarah Bernhardt described a battle looking out of the window, with magnificent effect. In fact it was far more dramatic than it would have been had we seen a combat *à la* Drury Lane. And very much the same looking-out-of-the-window effect was well done by Sardou for Sarah Bernhardt, in the celebrated first act of *Fedora*. And once more in *Theodora*, Sarah Bernhardt as the Empress describes the scenes in the Arena, which she is supposed to see from her throne.

What a host of memories poor Tom Robertson's play of *Caste* calls to mind. Oh! Those never-to-be-forgotten days of the little Prince of Wales' Theatre. How cleverly the dramatic author fitted all its occupants. Not a wrinkle here, a stitch too many there, or a seam too wide or narrow, a perfect fit for one and all alike. But then, of course, I must own the material was excellent to work upon; would there were more such looms of it nowadays, but that particular make seems to be going out of date, and such delightful fabric is not to be found for love or money. Of course, Tom Robertson discovered a genius in Mrs. Bancroft—why, Polly Eccles and Naomi Tighe were inspired by her, and who will ever forget either character as played by her, or the delightful Captain Hawtree of Mr. Bancroft, and the George d'Alroy of Mr. Fred Younge, the very best d'Alroy of them all. I don't know why, but to me Robertson seemed to read his plays and act them at the same time. He could convey so graphically his idea of the people he had created. To hear him read a play was to immediately grasp the meaning of every character. Perhaps they were so very, very human and true to life, and, perhaps, who knows, it was this wonderful facility for expression which helped so materially to bring success to the dear little Prince of Wales' Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, once named the "Dust Hole."

A Sleepless Holiday.

A SPELL of wet weather by the seaside was driving me melancholy mad. I cannot conceive anything more depressing than to be boxed up in a house, enveloped in a sea fog, and to hear the rain pattering on the verandah for four or five days without any break in the leaden grey sky. So, as I was within easy distance of Newhaven, I thought I would pop over to Paris by the Newhaven route, just for the sake of a change. Once across the "silver streak" (I must own I like the Newhaven route, for there is no prettier railway journey than that from Dieppe to Paris, by Rouen, and following the course of the romantic Seine), the weather was so lovely, the woods so green, and the Normandy orchards so full of fruit, that I wished I had taken the Havre journey, and gone up to Rouen or Paris by water. Before now I have rowed down from Paris to Havre, and a delightful adventure it was, but in these days of the everlasting "bike," I suppose rowing excursions, like walking trips, are old-fashioned and completely out of date.

The Fates pursued me with as much persistency as they did Orestes. For three dreadful nights I was tortured by the "Demon of Noise." I don't know what I had done to deserve it, but Destiny clutched me by the throat and would not let me go. I arrived at Newhaven in very good time for the night boat, and I might have turned in and had a good sleep long before the London train arrived, as I had come across country. But I have a dislike to

night journeys. I don't like the smell of the stuffy cabin. I have a horror of the sour sheets and the disagreeable odour of rancid oil with which they clean the fixings. And it is not agreeable to be turned out of the boat at four o'clock in the morning, or to take an owl's journey to Paris. I wanted the sea by daylight, the fresh air, the sun, the upper deck, and thought it would be better to arrive at Rouen by dinner-time. So I elected to sleep at an hotel near the quay, and to cross by the Sunday-morning boat. But sleep and I were strangers on that awful Saturday night. All through the long hours they were shunting goods trains and rattling chains, and clanking winches, and hauling merchandise, and blowing off steam generally. There was a boat for Caen, which had to be filled with a miscellaneous cargo, and luggage trains had to be emptied for the Newhaven route, and when the steamers were safely off to sea, the shunting and whistling began right under my bedroom window. Never mind, thought I, it can all be made up by a long and delightful sleep at old-world Rouen. Alas! for the vanity of human wishes. I was recommended to stay at an hotel which faces the quay and the steamers. Now, Rouen, though old-fashioned and delightful with its ancient clock, its quaint streets, and its perfect Gothic church St. Ouen, is cursed with an electric tram, and the horror of an electric tram is that it is accompanied by a jangling bell that never ceases whilst the tram pursues its evil way. Noiseless, indeed! If you want to experience the torment of electric trams, and the "tintinnabulation of the bells! bells! bells!" you need not go so far as Chicago, but can be maddened just as well at the old Gothic city of Rouen, which must have its Exhibition like every other city, ancient or modern, and with its Exhibition a new supply of electric trams with their maddening bells, which never stop from morning until night. We ought to thank our stars that we live in London, where trams are kept in the background, and the bicycle bell, combined with the news-

paper bawling vendors, are the most serious nerve destroyers. It sounds very pretty to talk of motor cars, and to hint that they will abolish noise. Oh dear no! The more noiseless the method of locomotion, the more bell-ringing. For if the vehicle cannot be heard coming along it is necessary to keep on ringing a bell to warn you of its approach. But I certainly did not expect to find the din of San Francisco and Chicago transferred to the sacred city of Joan of Arc. But this was not all. The electric trams ceased running and ringing about one o'clock in the morning. At four o'clock in the morning, exactly opposite the hotel, they began ringing steamer bells and whistling with fiendish iteration every other half hour. At six o'clock, the electric trams and the other bells started afresh. So there we were, two nights' sleep gone, one at Newhaven, the other at Rouen. I did not close my eyes for a solid hour on either night.

Never mind, thought I. It will be alright in Paris. I will go and sleep a long and refreshing sleep at a dear little hotel that I have known for twenty-five years, a cosy little place, handy for everything, and in the heart of Paris. No high-class fashionable hotels for me. I will be true to my old love. Imagine my horror when I found the courtyard of my favourite hotel full of ladders, scaffolds, pails of paint and whitewash. Half the windows were out of their frames, and all the shutters were being repaired. Alas, they were renovating the hotel, painting it, repairing it, adding new staircases, and heaven only knows what besides. I had not the heart to turn my back on an old friend, and the consequence was that sleep was impossible after four o'clock in the morning, for your French workman has an uncomfortable habit of starting business at cockcrow. And you know how painters talk, and jabber, and whistle, and sing, just to assert their matutinal virtue. But the painters and whitewashers did not have it all their own way. The carpenters and masons had something to say on the subject,

and they hammered away at the walls just over my head, and banged at the window sashes all over the courtyard. Paris seems to be in state of general repair. It must be a good time for the *ouvrier*. Fate pursued me to the very end, and when I arose after the third sleepless night I found my favourite little barber's shop, in the Rue du Helder, in possession of the painters, paperhangers, and whitewashers. Whilst I was being shaved, dabs of mortar kept falling on my unprotected head, for your Parisian shopkeeper never closes his door, under any circumstances, to a likely customer. Hotels, restaurants, theatres were all in a state of repair, and the smell of paint made me ill.

But not so ill as the silly French women who stalk about the streets in bicycle knickerbockers and foolishly imagine that the costume is becoming. A more distasteful sight I have seldom witnessed than the great dancing room of the Moulin Rouge, filled with unlovely women in knickerbockers, strutting about with their hands stuck in their pockets. The good taste of Parisian women appears to have deserted them. There was a time when they were distinguished, no matter in what class of life, for the spotlessness of their linen and the neatness of their shoes. But the knickerbocker-wearing woman is frowsy, and dirty into the bargain. And what has become of all this boasted gaiety and liveliness. I never saw a duller or drabbier collection of people than at the Moulin Rouge and the Parisian Olympia. Where on earth does the fun come in? I could not find a trace of it in the Parisian dancing rooms and music halls. If Miss Parisian Knickerbocker only knew how unseemly she looks, she would burn her bike and revert to lace petticoats, for which she was once distinguished.

In the year 1868 I arrived in Paris with pockets filled with letters of introduction to French theatrical managers and others, all written by Charles Fechter, asking that I might have the privilege of free admission to the various

theatres, as I was a dramatic critic on the English press. I delivered all the letters, and did not receive one single answer or a free ticket of any kind. This is an example of the courtesy of which Frenchmen boast. My experience is, that the managers of Parisian theatres never dream of answering a letter, and put all applications for "orders," when asked for by Englishmen, behind the fire. From that day to this I have never asked for a free admission to a French Theatre, though all the French actors and actresses that I have met in London have insisted that my card would be instantly recognised. But this time I thought I would try my luck again. I knew perfectly well what civility is always extended to every French critic in London, how Sarcey was made welcome by every London manager, how Zola was greeted when he visited our theatres, so I drew a bow at a venture, and, after paying for my seat in Paris for thirty years, I thought I would venture to ask for the privilege of the "press." I wanted to see *Les Deux Gosses*, which had already run for over 250 nights at the Ambigu. The play was to be produced at the Princess's, and I was naturally anxious to see the French original before I sampled the English version by my friends, George R. Sims and Arthur Shirley. It was impossible that the theatre could be very full. The play had enjoyed an enormous run. The weather in Paris was tropically hot; I never experienced such a September for burning heat. So, instead of paying as I usually do, I wrote to the director of the Ambigu Theatre, giving him my credentials, and asking for the favour of a couple of seats to see *Les Deux Gosses*, which was soon to be produced in London. I sent the note by special messenger, who arrived at the Ambigu before twelve in the morning, with instructions to wait for an answer. The messenger came back and said there was no answer, but that he was to go back at six o'clock. Long after eight, when I was dining elsewhere, and had given up all thought of *Les Deux Gosses*, my messenger, who had

taken two trips to the Ambigu, arrived back and handed to the concierge of my hotel, unenclosed in any letter and unaccompanied by any word of whatever kind, an *unnumbered pass for two to the gallery or the pit!* What would the Parisian journals have said if a French dramatic critic were told by Sir Henry Irving, or John Hare, or George Alexander, to pass in with the crowd to the gallery or pit? To have left my letter unanswered was all that I expected, but to give me, for self and wife, a pass-check for two, was adding insult to injury. But then the French nation is so polite! But I do not suppose that there is an English journalist or actor who has not the same kind of experience. "Come to the Française," said Got. "Why don't you send in your card to the administration?" said Febvre. "Do you mean to say that you have never been behind the scenes at the Maison de Molière?" observed Delauney to me. "Come, my dear fellow? You will be ever welcome, for you have done so much for us in England." And what is the result? To be shown the door at the Theatre Française, and to be presented with a pass-check for two at the Ambigu!

I alluded just now to the letters of introduction given to me by Fechter in 1868, all charmingly written and in his own incomparable style to his old "pals." One of these letters—I wish I had kept them all—I did deliver in person. It was to the elder Dumas, the grand old author of "Monte Christo." This was indeed an experience. I was ushered into the apartments of his daughter, who was a very devout woman. I was in an atmosphere of shrines, religious pictures, holy books and crucifixes. Here I waited until my card was presented to the great novelist! I was ushered into the kitchen of the apartment and found Alexandre Dumas the elder in his shirt sleeves, with an exposed chest front, cooking an omelette, with a pretty girl sitting on his knee! This was the first and last time I saw the great Dumas!

Here were these Parsee gentlemen and cricketers invited to play with Englishmen on the ground of an English athletic club, but were not allowed to enter the doors of the club on any consideration whatever. In fact the cricket field was divided into two sections, one for the Europeans and one for the natives, and no native dared to be seen in the European Section. Joking apart, it was a case of black and white. When the luncheon hour arrived, the English team went into the Gymkana club-house, and the Parsees went off to their own tents and messed alone. The inconsistency of this proceeding fairly astonished me. In England the whites and blacks of every creed and nationality would dine together in college hall, or in the halls of the various inns of court as students. In England, Indians and Parsees would not be shunned in any kind of society, and yet in India a wide line of distinction is drawn between the native and the European.

But the anomaly did not end here. During the cricket festival a splendid entertainment was given to the cricketers, and all the distinguished Europeans resident at, or visitors in Bombay, by a wealthy and distinguished Parsee lady, who lives in a palace on Malabar Hill. On this occasion the Governor-General of Bombay (Lord Harris, a celebrated cricketer), with all the English cricket team, were present, and decorated with garlands of Tuber roses by the Parsee ladies. I had the honour of an invitation also, and I remember well that to me was presented a specially constructed necklet of sweet-smelling flowers, with which I was invested by some very handsome Parsee girls in token of their admiration for some compliment I had paid in print to their courteous and highly-gifted race. And yet you will scarcely believe me when I say that although our hostess and her husband who invited us all, from the Governor-General downwards, to Malabar Hill, though sometimes invited on formal occasions to Government House, were not permitted to enter the doors of any club-house in

Bombay, and I can assure you that the lawn of the Bombay Yacht Club by the side of the sea is the rendezvous of all rank and fashion in Bombay! Nay, more! Our kindly hostess told me that although when in London during one celebrated season she entertained right royally the best people and the most aristocratic in the land, at home in Bombay not one of those she entertained in London was allowed to return the compliment by asking her even as a guest to tea in the Bombay Yacht Club.

But even this was not all! The father of this same highly-educated and distinguished Parsee lady had, out of his own pocket, bought some valuable land, and devoted it to an English club for athletic purposes on one of the loveliest spots in Bombay. But though bought, built, and furnished by him, his own daughter and his other children were not allowed to enter the grounds that their father had purchased, because it was an English club, and they were Parsees.

When I expressed my astonishment at this grave inconsistency to Anglo-Indians, they told me that I knew nothing about the subject, that it was far more important than I imagined, and "that a line must be drawn somewhere." I was equally astonished when I was told that it was "very bad form" to be seen driving about Bombay with a Parsee gentleman, one of the most intellectual companions I have ever met in any country. For that, however, I cared nothing. With my Parsee friend I went to the Towers of Joy and Silence, to a Parsee wedding, one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen, and to a Parsee funeral, one of the saddest, particularly when we came to the "corner of farewells," and the contents of the bier entered with the priests and attendants through that awful door, and the grim vultures swept down from the Tower of Silence, as the mourners were left alone weeping in the lovely flower garden. I was a "passenger," no doubt, but I was a student of manners, and customs also, and some of

the happiest hours I spent in Bombay were at the hospitable tables of my Parsee hosts, who before I left their splendid city, gave me a banquet at their own Parsee Club House, where I enjoyed a most delightful and memorable evening. Some day, perhaps, in the distant future the obstinate Anglo-Indian Conservatism will break down, and it will dawn upon the Anglo-Indian mind that a Parsee gentleman who can dine or lunch at Trinity College, Cambridge, with his fellow graduates and undergraduates, or at the Inner or Middle Temple, or Gray's Inn, with his fellow students, should not be debarred from lunching with his fellow-cricketers in the Gymkana Club at Bombay, and that similarly a gifted lady who has entertained Royalty and the highest aristocracy in London, and welcomed the Governor-General of Bombay at Malabar Hill, would do no dishonour to the afternoon teas and pleasant social gatherings at the Yacht Club at Bombay. Why should not social law bend in India as elsewhere? We have won India, we have Anglicized India; let us live with India.

Four Memories!

AFTER reading and discussing the everlasting question how the mighty London of the future will be able to bury its dead; after pitying romantic old Hampstead, out Hendon way, if this delightful suburb is to be burdened with another cemetery, for, let me insist, the misery of a cemetery is not contained alone in its site, but the passing and re-passing all day long of melancholy processions; after wondering again and again why, in spite of Extra Mural Acts, Brompton Cemetery is still allowed to exist as a burial place in the very heart of a crowded city, and after pondering once more on cremation as a fitting form of Christian burial, four memories came across my mind.

* * *

I was driving home one lovely warm evening from Malabar Hill, Bombay. An entertainment had been given by a rich Parsee lady, Mrs. Ready Money, in honour of the English cricketers, captained by Lord Hawke. On one side of us, as we drive along, is the sea; on the other a high wall. Over the wall, a faint blue smoke curls upwards among the trees, and it is blown by the soft breeze from the garden to the sea. I am conscious of an extraordinary and disagreeable odour. I sit up in the carriage astonished, and when on the point of asking a question, I have it answered without putting it, by my friend, the Army doctor. "Oh! that's nothing," he said, laughing. "Over that wall they are burning their dead—Hindoo fashion."

* * *

I am again on Malabar Hill one lovely summer morning. My companion is a grave, learned, and spectacled Parsee gentleman, wearing the conical cap of his gifted and industrious race. We are going together to the Towers of Silence. The garden is a lovely one, full of roses and geraniums, and the purple bouganvillia, which grows in profusion in Bombay. We pass little resting places as we wander about the garden and temples where the sacred fire is ever lighted. All around us we find peace, beauty, serenity, and calm profound. But over our heads among the trees flap hideous and ominous-looking birds. On the Towers of Silence these ghastly creatures sit gorged in a ring. These are the vultures that have assembled to destroy the dead, the vultures that, by tradition, never die —the vultures that are to prey and batten on the best-beloved, men, women, and little children. They spare none. At last we arrive at Farewell Corner. A procession is coming round the corner and preparing to descend the hill. On a bier, covered with flowers, is the body of a little child. The mourners have come to the limit and they must go no further. There is an agonizing parting between the distracted mother and the little dead child. The dull, ugly gates of the Tower of Silence open and forth come the priests and the attendants. No one else has ever been admitted behind these hideous portals. They take up the bier and march in slow procession to the grey gates. They are opened. The procession passes in. There is one more piercing cry from the distracted mother as the gates close with a dreadful clang. Then, to our horror, we see the air full of fluttering flapping wings. The vultures swoop into the ghastly hollow of the Tower of Silence. Then comes silence indeed. It is all over. This is the form of Parsee Burial in Bombay.

* * *

I am perched on a high barge in front of the Sacred Burning Ghaut at Benares. A huge flight of steps leads

down to the sacred River, in which, not fifty yards away from the holy mysteries of burning the dead, the devout pilgrims are bathing and saying their prayers. On almost every step of the marble staircase is a dead body wrapped in its shroud, and awaiting the lighting of the funeral pyre. If the relatives of any of these "dear dead women, with such hair, too," can afford enough money to buy sufficient wood to complete the sacrifice, then nothing remains but the ashes. But the poor can afford very little, so they make very short work of them, and bundle the bodies, half cremated, into the Holy River, close to the devout Hindoos who are making their ablutions in the stream. To me it is a horrible sight. But this is the way they dispose of their dead in the Holy City of Benares.

* * *

I am on the East Coast of England, in a churchyard by the sea. It is on the top of a cliff covered with blue corn-flowers and scarlet poppies. The air is perfumed with wild flowers and the scent of the ripening corn. The funeral procession of a young girl is winding its way up the hill. They loved her very dearly, and the little village children have covered the bier, borne by villagers, with wild flowers plucked by their own hands. They rest the coffin on the stone under the Lych Gate. Forth from the old church comes a clergyman in his pure white robes. He makes his way to the gate amidst marble crosses and simple monuments, each with some motto or text dedicated to the dead. His voice rings clear in the summer air. Pronouncing the sentences of the most beautiful service in the English Prayer Book, he proceeds at the head of the flower-covered coffin to the fantastic porch of the old church. I linger in the churchyard and see the open grave lined with flowers. To-night it will be closed over. To-morrow it will be decked with blossom. Next week a simple cross will be at the head of the pretty grave. Next year, on the

anniversary of the dead, the lover of this girl will come and let his tears fall on the fresh bright turf, and—this is the secret of it all—*believe she is there!* beautiful as when she died. This is the way they bury in England. It is, to my mind, the best of all, for here on the cliff, among the flowers, close by the soothing sea, is the true "Garden of Sleep!"

Margate and Dancing Rooms.

I HOPE I have not broken the spell this year. I have always considered it unlucky to come up to London, or even to see the mighty Metropolis during a hard-earned holiday. So I had to put on my considering cap, and think very deeply, in order to discover how to arrive at Margate from Hayling Island without putting my foot upon the London paving-stones. Of course, you will ask me "Where is Hayling Island?" Well, it is somewhere anyhow, as the Americans would say, and if you want to know where it is, you had better study the map, and get lost in the mazes of Portsmouth, Portsea, Landport, Southsea, Spithead, and so on. At any rate, Hayling Island is a place where they grow rabbits, lobsters, oysters, and red mullet in abundance, and where they also cultivate an unlimited quantity of broken bottles, tin kettles, cast-off frying pans, and miscellaneous potsherds, which serve to amuse the "bunnies" on an enormous sea-kissed common, and don't seem to distress the inhabitants of Hayling Island, who revel in the art of untidyness and sublime disorder. Capitalists of all kinds have offered their aid to Hayling; they have undertaken to connect it with the main land, to plant out its lovely common with shrubs and flower gardens, to build it houses, to give it the dignity of a pier, to bring to it Viennese, Hungarian, Red, and White, and other bands; to make its beach and bathing not only the best in all England, which is true now, but the most popular, which at present it certainly is not. But

Hayling, its commoners, its copyholders, its common-right holders, and its Noah's Arkian conservatives will see them "all blowed first." So Hayling remains in the same condition as it was after the flood, for I am certain nothing but a flood could have washed upon the common so many bits of bottles and sea refuse as I behold in my daily walks along the deserted sea shore. A proposal was made to me the other day to form a company to utilize Hayling as a first-class rabbit-producing and oyster-growing country, the best in the wide world. But it is no good proposing anything at Hayling. They like their broken bottles and frowsy old tin kettles, and the "flotsam and jetsam of the sea," so far as the mere beach is concerned. Elsewhere Hayling is as neat as a new pin, and as pretty as a picture. Besides, to attempt to do anything for Hayling would be to involve you in a law suit that might last till Doomsday!

But I am wandering far away from my attempt to get to Margate from Hayling Island without touching London. If I had dared to go across country I should have arrived at the delightful Royal York Hotel, Margate—a cosy and well-conducted home, breathing of Art, and Drama, and Literature, which I can confidently recommend to the brain-fagged and weary, particularly in one of the charming airy, upper-floor bedrooms, with a breeze blowing sweet and fresh from the North Sea—I should have arrived, I say, at Margate, by the Overland Route, as old as Rip Van Winkle. When, idling at Brighton, at the end of the West Pier, I started up and shrieked Eureka—my companion thought I was mad! "A boat starts from the Brighton West Pier every week for Boulogne!" said I, in my most excited tones. "Well, what of that?" answered the calm one. "What of that? Why, I have found how to get to Margate without going to London: Hayling to Brighton, a mere bagatelle; Brighton to Boulogne, rather a sickener on a rough day; Boulogne to Calais, nothing; Calais to Dover by the afternoon boat; Dover to Ramsgate and Margate

a delightful little drive, if trains won't fit—and there you are. In truth, a far quicker way than going across country by rail in England."

However, I risked it, by going by Havant to Victoria, and literally sneaking round from the platform of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway to the platform of the London, Chatham and Dover line, which are next-door neighbours. The question is, did I really go to London? I was under glass all the way. I did not actually go into the streets of London. I never went out of the Victoria Station yard; but the mischief of it was, that there is no actual communication between the two stations, except from outside. And here comes a curious circumstance. If you want to take your luggage from the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway to the London, Chatham and Dover Victoria, how are you to do it? A porter of either company may not stray off his own domain. There is such an individual, I believe, as an "outside porter," but he is seldom visible, and when seen, is harassed and overworked. An "outside porter" would have taken an hour to convey my "Heath" portmanteau a distance of fifty yards. So it is the quickest way to take a cab next door.

After an excellent dinner at the "York," in the company of an old comrade, and a long talk over old memories, we strolled, of course, on to the "extension" as it is called, to note the Margate fashions. To my surprise at nine o'clock the pier was suddenly deserted. This is the dancing hour. Margate divides itself into two sections. One goes up the hill to the Assembly Rooms, in the old-world part of Margate, where, when the old Hotel and rooms were managed by the elder Villiers—he is as young and vivacious and talkative now, as he was then—I first heard Selina Dolaro sing, and Van Biene play on the 'cello. The other section goes along the beach to the Hall-by-the-Sea, a place that would make foreigners stare. There is not a suggestion of fast or free life at the Hall-by-the-Sea. Babies of two, little girls

of twelve, boys of any age, scamper or crawl among the dancers. There is not the faintest suggestion of the Paris Casino or the Moulin Rouge about this excellently conducted place, whose principal feature is decorum, not to say dulness. But I was astonished to find the change that has come over our English dancing. In my dancing-days, when Strauss and Gung'l and Metra were to the front with their most melodious music, we all swung with the measure of the waltz; we really waltzed as Germans waltz, suggesting something like the poetry of motion; and there is no prettier sight than a waltz well danced. But, bless my heart, the waltz of to-day! It is not waltzing at all Not one dancer understands the rhythm or accent of a waltz. The man stands up on the floor as stiff as a hop-pole, the woman clutches at him as if he were an animated flag-staff, and they revolve together like tee-to-tums, out of valse time at every step. This kind of entertainment must have been instituted by Quakers or General Booth. I never saw such absurd dancing. It is not dancing, it is rolling, and as tedious to look at as an Egyptian sway-and-swing dance in a Cairene Café. I must say I never saw such hideous dancing—and by hideous I mean ungraceful and wearisome, as in the East, Egypt, India, China, Japan *passim*—until I arrived at Merry Margate, where the deplorable dulness of the measure took my breath away. Mr. Turveydrop would have banished it even from his school of deportment. And this aimless gyrating led me to reminiscences of the dancing-places I have known in London and elsewhere in the days of long ago, when we all danced and made merry.

In my young days, the chief dancing-places in or near the West End were Cremorne Gardens (only open in the summer months); the Argyll Rooms, at the top of the Haymarket, where the Trocadero now stands; the Holborn Casino—once a bath house, and now used as the principal dining-room of the Holborn Restaurant; a disgraceful and

vile hole, known as the Piccadilly Saloon, No. 222, Piccadilly; Mott's, in Foley Place, Langham Street; and Caldwell's, in Dean Street, Soho. You must remember that there was no such thing as early closing in those days. To go on the spree was literally to make a night of it. The plan was this! First, a dinner at a restaurant—the Wellington was a very good one—in the salons once devoted to gambling at Crockford's, and now turned into a very comfortable club. After dinner the play; say, to see Robson at the Olympic in the *Porter's Knot*, or the lovely Miss Herbert in a burlesque. Then came a look in at the Argyll Rooms, where gentlemen never dream'd of dancing—the dancing was done by hired, and very seedy professionals. The Argyll, for a man of fashion, was merely a lounge and a stroll, exactly the same kind of lounge and stroll that is seen to this hour in all the popular variety theatres. I cannot detect the slightest difference. After the Argyll, at about midnight, the golden youth would leave the halls of dazzling light, and repair to one of the Haymarket night-houses, which existed by the dozen all round Panton Street, Jermyn Street, Regent Street, and the Haymarket. The most fashionable of these places in my time were Sally Sutherland's, under the portico leading from the Haymarket to Waterloo Place; Kate Hamilton's, Rose Young's, Coney's, and so on. I found these places always intolerably dull, and boring to distraction. There was no laughter, no merriment, mere ugly, unanimated, soddened viciousness. Fabulous prices were paid for uneatable suppers and vile, poisonous champagne, and the man about town, or the visitor, or the mere sight-seer, who did not stand unlimited treat to anyone who asked for it—and they did ask for it in the most unblushing manner—were considered "no gentlemen." After the night-houses, where roués, old and young, assembled, came a visit to Mott's, where gentlemen were all allowed to dance, and where the dance was generally supplemented by some awful row or other, in the shape of

a free fight or a disgraceful shindy. And then to bed, or to some pal's rooms, at five or six o'clock in the morning. This was called going round town, and I must confess that to me, personally, it was the dullest and stupidest entertainment that could be inflicted on any human being. I saw no fun in it whatever. I felt pale and weary, and I am certain I looked so. There was no romance about "a night out" in the year 1860. We pretended to enjoy ourselves, but didn't.

A summer evening at Cremorne was a different matter. The dancing garden was not so good or so smart and stylish as Mabille in Paris, but on the same plan. Some fine gardens, which looked terribly seedy and dissipated by day, but lit up well under the glare of the gaslight, grass, geraniums and roses. A huge circular platform, on which everyone danced; a magnificent band, led by Riviere; promenaders, incessantly going round and round the platform till they became so giddy with the process that they had to turn the other way; mysterious hermits, tucked away in dark corners; little arbours and boskages, where parties or couples wined or supped; and so it went on until the dark and black sky changed to a delicious blue, and the day dawned nearer and nearer, and nature contrasted divinely with this triumphant wickedness, and the birds began singing in the old Cremorne trees; and the painted faces looked uglier and uglier under the terrible limelight of accusing day; and the old men, lined and weather beaten and wrinkled, looked a hundred; and the young boys became old boys of sixty; and the cabs were called, and away we went, some standing on the hind springs of a hansom, some on the board in front; and so we got home, and crept gently upstairs, leaving our boots in the hall for fear of awakening the household.

It was possible to see life in a far quieter and soberer fashion at the Holborn Casino, which I well remember as a popular bath-house, as well as a dancing-room. It stood

exactly as it stands now. Where the bathing-boxes existed they now dine; where we plunged, they dine also to-day. The floor on which we danced is now covered with little tables; there are little tables also in the galleries, where we lounged and watched the dancers to the strains of Packer's band. But it was a quiet inoffensive place, innocent of noise or revelry. Sometimes a particularly pretty girl made a furore, and held a kind of levée at the Holborn; all fashionable London claiming her hand in the dance, and treating her in true chivalric fashion, as if she were a goddess or an empress. Who can have forgotten the days of Mabel Grey, who was originally a nursemaid in Camden Town, but came to be recognised as the most beautiful and extensively-photographed young woman in London—the successor of Laura Bell, Skittles, Anonyma, Baby Jordan, and the rest of them?

Caldwell's, in Dean Street, Soho, was even a quieter place still; it was originally a dancing academy, but at night-time it was handed over to the shop-girls and shop-assistants of the West End houses, who met together and enjoyed an innocent dance and a little flirtation of no very pronounced character. I have spent happier evenings at dingy old Caldwell's, in the old days, than in more gorgeous palaces of the dance. There was nothing mercenary or degrading about Caldwell's. It was, of course, a free and easy; but as regards courtesy, respect for women, and good taste, it was as unexceptionable as the Hall-by-the-Sea or the Assembly Rooms in the Margate of to-day. People who wanted to dance repaired there, and introductions were unnecessary. No girl, or married woman, for the matter of that, would be offended if asked to dance by a perfect stranger. In fact, she would consider it a compliment, and insults were unknown in the cosy circles of Caldwell's—one of the quietest dancing rooms of the past.

Eating Houses Past and Present.

SITTING one evening in the new and beautiful Trocadero Restaurant, at dinner, surrounded by cultured and refined Society, the hall with the golden gallery beautifully decorated, monster chrysanthemums on the dinner table, flowers everywhere, lights in abundance, I could not help recognizing one more turn of "The Wheel of Life." Is it not a very strange circumstance that the two most notorious Casinos or Dancing Rooms that existed in London in the year 1860, when I first started work, should, in the year 1896, be two of the most fashionable and well-conducted restaurants and dining-halls—places that Paris and Brussels put together cannot approach? Yes, it is quite true. The Holborn Casino has become the Holborn Restaurant, and the Argyll Rooms, in Windmill Street, Haymarket, have become the Trocadero Restaurant, the latest addition to the pleasure houses of wealthy London, a luxurious palace well worthy of the great City in which it has been built. On the evening that I entered the Trocadero Restaurant for the first time, I found hundreds being turned away from the doors. Every table in the place was full, and had been secured beforehand, so it would appear that the celebrated and enterprising firm of Lyons & Co. had once more hit the right nail on the head. It is clear that the Trocadero Restaurant has supplied a want. The demand was made; here is the supply, given with a liberal hand. As with plays, so with restaurants. The public will not pay for

rubbish. They soon sift out the good from the bad. The days of "cheap and nasty" are over, in London, at least, for ever. The Duval Restaurants, of Paris, would have no more success now, in our great and gilded City, than the revival of an old Alamode Beef Shop.

And now let me see how we used to dine in 1860, those of us who were not blest with the world's riches. The cheapest place that attracted us, in those early days when we were very hard up, was Izant's, in Bucklersbury, Cheapside. Here you could dine for a shilling, which included a penny for the waiter. "Roast Beef, Potatoes, Bread, a Pint of Beer, a Penny for the Waiter, and a thank you, Sir!" That was the formula at Izant's. I grant you it was all very clean; but it was rough. There were no Japanese chrysanthemums on the table in those days, no gorgeous servants, but only a very hard-worked, industrious, and sad-faced waiter. The chief patrons of Izant's were City clerks, young fellows from the Government Offices, and medical students from Guy's Hospital and St. Thomas', and from St. Bartholomew's, in Smithfield, which, in those days, was full of sheep and cattle pens, the live stock being driven from the country to be sold in the open. At the time I speak of the live cattle market had not migrated from Smithfield to the Caledonian Road. The Charter House and St. Bartholomew's, alike, were surrounded by baa-ing sheep and lowing cattle.

Now let us suppose that we are living in the year 1860, and that you and I, dear companions of my lost youth, are taking a walk together, linked arm in arm, from Izant's in Bucklersbury, along Fleet Street and the Strand westward. What a change! St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Paul's Churchyard still exist, where my dear mother used to take me with her to do her shopping when we lived in New North Road, Hoxton, in the early Forties, and journeyed in a Chelsea 'bus, price threepence, from the Sturt Arms to the City. But in 1860 the tea-shop of Alderman Dakin

was at one corner of Ludgate Hill approach from St. Paul's, and Griffiths and Farran's book-shop, beloved by boys who devoured light literature and travels, at the other. But Ludgate Hill was unwidened. No Alderman Treloar, earnest and energetic, had then come to the front, and as there was no Ludgate Hill Station and no Holborn Viaduct, it was quite unnecessary to span Ludgate Hill with a hideous railway bridge.

I think I must stop for a moment at the old Deanery under the dark archway leading to Doctors' Commons. Under this same archway, in the year 1860, were to be seen mysterious men with tall hats, black coats, and white aprons. They looked to me like Freemasons in light mourning. I have no idea to this day what they did, why they wore white aprons, and I think silver badges, but I was told they had something to do with marriage and divorce—and at that time marriage and divorce were under the sway of the ecclesiatical authorities. At any rate, there they stood under the Doctors' Commons archway, and goodness only knows if their white aprons attracted many to the bonds of holy matrimony or secured freedom from the matrimonial link. They looked to me like well-fed cooks tempting the passer-by to a convenient restaurant. Yes, down that dark archway, which always gave me the horrors, will be found the Deanery of St. Paul's. A dull, gloomy, fog-haunted house I picture it as I cast my memory back to about 1853. But the whole atmosphere of St. Paul's was murky and gloomy. Just before we arrive at the Deanery we had passed St. Paul's School, where often and often I peeped through a grille or iron cage to see the poor imprisoned boys playing football in a kind of animal den. It all seemed so unnatural, so wicked, so cruel, to keep boys there at their games in a kind of catacomb. I was at school at Marlborough, in the heart of the bracing Wiltshire Downs. Our cricket field was on the top of a wind-swept

slope; our football playing was in the air, and when I came home from the holidays I pitied the St. Paul's boys playing their games in this cage open to the street, as much as I pitied the Blue Coat Boys in Newgate Street, with their gowns tucked up exhibiting their yellow stockings, and trying to be jolly in a London fog. But times have changed. "The Wheel of Life" has spun round. The St. Paul's Boys have been pushed on to Hammersmith, Charter House has been advanced to Godalming, and in a few years' time the playing fields of Charter House, and the old street of Newgate will know the Merchant Tailors' School and the Blue Coat School no more.

But I have been a long time arriving at the Deanery of St. Paul's, where I am made welcome as a mere lad by the Very Rev. Henry Hart Milman, D.D., dean, scholar, poet and historian. This was one of the rendezvous of literature and the fine arts in the early Fifties. On Sunday evenings at the Deanery, Thackeray was a lion. In fact, every literary man of note might have been seen at the St. Paul's Deanery, when the author of the "Fall of Jerusalem" and "The History of the Jews" was the amiable and accomplished host. It was a striking figure. Half bowed by age, with piercing eyes and enormous black bushy eyebrows, with an aquiline nose, and purely Eastern features, it was easy to see why the brilliant author of "Fazio" wrote the "History of the Jews." His very name, Henry Hart Milman, betrayed his origin from a sacred race.

And now we get on to the one place that has remained comparatively untouched during my lifetime. I allude to the "Cheshire Cheese" in Fleet Street. This is about the only bit of old London left as I remember it as a boy. The "Cheshire Cheese" has been written about, and described, and illustrated so often that there is no need for me to add to "Cheshire Cheese" literature. Whenever I go there for a "fired chop" and a glass of Old Burton, I see before me the faces of Charles J. Stone, a dear, good fellow, and a

member of the Arundel Club; of his friend Adams Reilly, an original member of the Alpine Club, who was at Brasenose College, Oxford, with Stone, and acted with him in private theatricals in Academic Days. I see, also, Horace Green, who might have sat for Tom Stylus in Robertson's "Society," and who, I am certain, suggested the character; and the gentle, refined, and learned Deane, the art critic; and dear old E. L. Blanchard, who every year gave a Cheshire Cheese Lark Pudding Dinner in honour of the success of his Drury Lane Annual; and brilliant Godfrey Turner, poet, journalist, and essayist, never sufficiently appreciated whilst he lived; and many more who have faded away into the land of shadows. It was at the "Cheshire Cheese" that an American friend of ours, a temporary member of the Arundel Club, a gentleman of the name of Howard, made us all laugh heartily. This Howard, of America, was the real subject of the story of the "Stranger in our Gates," who had been taken all over London, treated to a lunch, a dinner, entertainments, cigars, drinks, cab fares, what not, and who, on returning home over Waterloo Bridge, which was then a toll, planked down a halfpenny for his own fare, and said "D—n it all, you dear good fellows, I must pay something!" Well, Howard was dining with us at the "Cheshire Cheese," and was much amused by the monotonous method of the waiter who called up his orders through the pipe in the same stereotyped fashion. He amused us by saying in his droll, American fashion, "Say John! See here! Just *intone* me another chop!" And so I take farewell of the "Cheshire Cheese!"

The "Rainbow" in Fleet Street must have stood pretty much as it is now for forty years or more. But its opposite neighbour, the "Cock," immortalized by Tennyson, has gone the way of all old taverns and eating houses. There was little difference between the "Cock" and the "Cheshire Cheese." Both had sanded floors, little well-

polished old black oak boxes, a bright roaring fire, a huge kettle on the hob, and a head waiter, whose duty it was to know, or pretend to know everybody, and make the guests cheerful and happy. The fare was very simple and good. A steak or chop admirably cooked, splendid mealy potatoes, a Welsh rarebit, a pint of ale or stout, or both mixed, and afterwards a glass of hot grog, the best digestive in the world, with long churchwarden pipes, and genial conversation. I must own I loved those old days. Such simple honest fare agrees with me better than the best cooked dinner ever set before a king or epicure. I did not mind the sanded floor in the least; the old oaken boxes protected you from the draught; the fire and the kettle were cheerful companions; the grog was comforting, and the smoke went out of the churchwarden pipes in blue curls, which were soothing to the lazy and contemplative smoker. But some scoundrel stole the gilded Cock from the portals of this once celebrated tavern. It faded out, and then the place disappeared for ever. I must say that I should like to find, somewhere in London, an old chop-house that would remind me of the old "Cheshire Cheese," or the "Cock," in Fleet Street, close by Temple Bar, when it was a Bar and a Gateway; or, best of all, the Scotch Stores, in Oxford Street, a few doors from Oxford Circus, which was by far the best chop-house of the kind to be found in London in the year 1860. If the "Cheshire Cheese" and the "Cock" were warm and cosy, this place was warmer and cosier still. If they had bright coal fires, this fire was a welcome to the cold and hungry stranger. If their kettles hissed, this one hissed a merrier tune than all. Delightful evenings have I spent, warm and cosy, in the polished mahogany boxes of the old Scotch Stores, at the time that old Curtis presided, a man as amiable, polite, and courteous as any butler at an old country house. Many a glass of warm Scotch whisky at the Scotch Stores has saved me from a sudden cold, and many a pint of sound port wine

has ended a weary day in contentment and in peace. But times have changed, and they turned the dear old coffee-house into a flash drinking bar. It paid better, I suppose, but I bitterly regretted the loss of the old tavern, where, after dinner, tucked up in a corner, I have written many a story, essay, sketch, and poem.

After passing through Temple Bar, and possibly getting "a shave" at a little shop under the very portals, a tiny establishment whose proprietor, before he commenced operations, delighted in tilting you up in the chair, and declaring that your head was in the West and your legs in the City of London. It was such a dark and mysterious little shop that I was always reminded when in it of the gruesome East End drama, very popular years ago, called "Sweeney Tod." Carr's Restaurant, close to Danes' Inn and St. Clement's Church, was distinguished in the old days, as was Blanchard's, in Beak Street, for its beautiful pictures on the walls. The food was good and wholesome, the shilling pint of Beaune a thing to be remembered, and its private rooms were chiefly used by young journalists for starting or talking over some new venture, which usually failed. Sir Douglas Straight and Charles Ross, still happily amongst us, as also John Proctor, the artist, will remember our great political paper, edited by Hamilton Hume, who helped to turn out an unpopular Ministry, owing to Proctor's splendid cartoons, which were afterwards enlarged as wall posters for political purposes, and used all over the country. The historic "Cock," in Fleet Street, as I said before, has disappeared; but there is very little change, indeed, in the "Rainbow" in Fleet Street, or good old Simpson's in the Strand, these thirty-five years past. I think I must be one of the oldest patrons at Simpson's. I dined there regularly in 1860, and scarcely a week passes that I do not dine there now, preferring, as I ever have done, good plain wholesome food, the best of meat, the best of vegetables, the best of wine, to all the

kickshaws and set dinners and messes that could be put before me. Here the patient and scientific gentlemen still play chess, for Simpson's has ever been associated with chess, the best of fish, and prime joints, and venison in season. Here, in a delightful upper room, the Knights of the Round Table hold their cheery meetings of good fellowship; and here, in the ladies' dining-room upstairs, flitting about the cosy boxes and tables, the ever popular Charles Flowerdew hands about his snuff-box after the fashion of good old Paddy Green at Evans, beams upon the visitors, and tells wonderful Suffolk stories. Good fare, comfort, homeliness, and civility are, and ever have been, the characteristics of Simpson's in the Strand. Long may it flourish, for here we have a real bit of old London left.

Across the road, years ago, over the way you might have found an old chop house very popular with journalists, called the "Edinburgh Castle." It resembled in its plan both the "Cheshire Cheese" and the "Cock," and it rejoiced in old boxes, sanded floor, and a steaming kettle of hot water on the hob of a bright and cheery fire. Here you might have found any night, John Oxenford, the brilliant and learned dramatic critic of *The Times*, ever accompanied by his faithful friend Mr. Murphy, once in a Government Office, and now, as of old, a member of the Conservative Club; and Mr. Herbert, who nearly always shared John Oxenford's private box at the theatre. Here also came Bayle Bernard, the genial Irishman and dramatic critic of the *Dispatch*, and delightful good-hearted Charlie Dunphie, then the art and dramatic critic of the *Morning Post*, a most amiable and courteous gentleman, whose face his old friends miss at the playhouse, but it is still to be found in the art galleries of London. But two of the most frequent visitors at the old "Edinburgh Castle" were my dear old friend Ashby-Sterry, the poet and essayist, who looks as young now as he did twenty-five years ago, and he was invariably accompanied by that best of good fellows, E

L. Blanchard, who always had some chaff or dedicatory verses ready for John, the waiter at this famous hostelry. It was always a custom with us to assemble and dine together at the "Edinburgh Castle" on the night of the Drury Lane Pantomime and toast E. L. B. before the curtain went up on his latest annual.

But London saw no greater change in its old conservative habits of eating and drinking than when Spiers and Pond arrived from Australia, and set up in various parts of London their gilded saloons and public drinking bars. One of the very first established was at the Gaiety Corner in the Strand. Previously bar drinkers had to resort to public houses, and such as wanted a chop or light refreshment patronised the old "tavern parlour," now a thing of the past. This "tavern parlour," particularly in the suburbs, was quite an institution. Before the days of literary institutes, public reading rooms, and the little clubs that now abound, the "tavern parlour" was the club of the district. Here, at night, when shops were closed and work was over, the leading lights of the neighbourhood came to discuss the affairs of the parish and of the nation, and of the world at large. They smoked long churchwarden clay pipes, filled with excellent tobacco, and in their political, social, parochial or other debates they usually sat and discussed under the presidency of a chairman. The debates, very serious and very earnest, drifted gradually into a sing-song, usually on a Saturday night. And here you have the evolution of the modern music hall. Nearly forty years ago, Charles Morton, the father of the Music Halls, and now the esteemed director of amusement at the Palace Theatre, was the landlord and proprietor of a popular tavern over Westminster Bridge, called the "Canterbury Arms." This tavern, of course, boasted its "tavern parlour" which, under the guidance and presidency of such a man, was extremely popular. Here, as at the "Belvedere" on Pentonville Hill, where there was an

open racket court on which I have often played; here, as at the "Oxford and Cambridge" Tavern, in Chalk Farm Road, which also boasted an open racket court on which I have constantly played and won prizes, coached by Frank Erwood, or one of the open racket court professionals; here, as at the "North Pole" in Hoxton, or the "Greyhound" at Dulwich, or the "Yorkshire Stingo" in the Marylebone Road, they established in the "tavern parlour" a kind of a friendly debating society in the week time and a "sing-song" on Saturday night. Well, Charles Morton's Saturday night "sing-song" at the "Canterbury Arms," Westminster Bridge Road, became so exceedingly popular that he was waited on by a deputation of wives. If the husband, who every night went out to "smoke a pipe" enjoyed themselves so much and came home with such glowing accounts of the songs, and glees, and madrigals they had heard, why should not the wives accompany their husbands? Charles Morton saw no objection. There was nothing to be heard in his "tavern parlour" that might not be heard in a parish schoolroom. Songs of doubtful tendency and all the scum of the Cider Cellars and the Coal Hole were not to be heard at the "Canterbury Arms." This was the rendezvous of respectable citizens. So the wives came with their husbands and crowded the room to suffocation. And so the "Canterbury Arms" became the splendid Canterbury Hall, with its priceless pictures, its singing-room, its skittle alley, and its countless attractions for amusement lovers of both sexes and all ages. And so the Canterbury Hall budded into the Oxford Music Hall elsewhere, and enterprise was on the "go" and "on the move," until the greedy dog-in-the-manger theatre managers stepped in and stopped all progress in amusement for very many years. But this is how the first music hall was started, and this was the meaning of the chairman, with his table and ivory hammer, who has been effaced by time and modern orchestras.

On Stage Fights.

I HAVE been making enquiries from experienced actors, notably from my dear old friend John S. Clarke, who knows the stage of America and England during the last fifty odd years by heart, concerning the practice of actors in using unblunted and dangerous weapons in the exercise of their art. From all that I can learn, it is a miracle that there are not more accidents to be recorded. It is certain that the actors of the old school were not so foolhardy as those of the present day, for Edmund Kean, and doubtless Macready, partly protected themselves with basket-handled swords with which to fight the furious combats in *Richard the Third* and *Macbeth.* They would scarcely have risked their lives with the tempered weapons that modern realism insists upon. With Macready it would have been positively dangerous to risk an encounter with unblunted swords, for he roused himself to the passion of the scene by actually working himself into a fury behind the scenes. He would shake a ladder, stamp, swear, rave, and do anything to simulate ungovernable frenzy, stopping short of the realism of Gustavus Brooke, who crammed his mouth full of chalk to make believe that he was foaming with rage, and tumbled off a chair on to the stage to simulate the position of a man who had just been thrown from his horse as Richard.

A good story is told of Macready and Phelps in the Macbeth and Macduff fight. Macready, as Macbeth, commenced the old game of groaning, cursing, and swearing at Macduff *sotto voce.* But he positively frightened Phelps, who, when he came off, expressed his disgust and horror,

saying he was not accustomed to be abused in such an intemperate fashion. "Oh, never mind that," said a bystander, "It's only Mac's way. Pay him back in his own coin, and give him a taste of your special Billingsgate." Whereupon the very next night, directly Macbeth began swearing, Macduff swore more awful words still; when Macbeth cursed enough to make the blood boil and curdle, Macduff did the same, and the combined oaths were sufficient to take the poor prompter's hair off. But it is recorded that the fight never went better.

There is not so much danger in stage fights with foils, as they are always buttoned; but there is always the danger of the button falling off, when a clumsy thrust would kill a man as dead as a door nail. The peril is with dagger fights, unless what are called "trick daggers" are used, that is to say, daggers mechanically made, whose blades sink into the shaft or handle when the blow is struck, and serious danger, also in ordinary stage combats, when actors refuse to use blunted weapons. Conceive, for instance, the danger of the celebrated sword fight in the "Dead Heart," at the Lyceum, between Henry Irving and S. B. Bancroft! Both actors are short-sighted, and can see with difficulty without glasses, but here they were pounding away at one another night after night, saving their precious lives alone by careful practice and accurate timing. It is idle to say that experienced actors cannot go wrong in such matters. The facts of the stage prove the contrary. Allowance must always be made for excitability, and the dangerous eventuality of "losing one's head." All actors cannot be "calm, self-contained, and passionless" according to the mistaken Talma and Coquelin theory. The true artist does lose himself in the passion of the scene, and on the whole plays far better than the cool, calculating actor. I would not give a fig for an actor who can laugh, talk, and chaff two seconds before he goes on the stage for a serious scene, and allows his dressing room

to be full all the evening with silly chatterers. Much more do I admire the artist who is brooding, talking to himself, and getting into the skin of the part behind the scenes, and who, if he were addressed before going on the stage on some irrelevant topic, would turn round like a fiend, as an old friend of mine once did, and said to the interrupter, "D——n you, sir! How dare you address me? Don't you see I am going on the stage?" It is very much the same with me when I am watching a play, and compelled to get every detail of it into my head between the hours of eight and eleven thirty. During the progress of a play I hate to be interrupted or disturbed. If I am spoken to, I am like a bear with a sore head, and the empty chatter of the stalls between the acts drives me into a perfect frenzy. On these important occasions the inside of a box is a haven of rest and delight. At any rate, you can think there, undisturbed, and there is not much time, I can assure you, for thinking on the first night of a new play.

I am happy to say that I have only witnessed one painful and serious stage accident. That was the first night of *Michael Strogoff*, at the Adelphi, when Charles Warner nearly lost his life by clutching at the unblunted dagger worn by James Fernandez. It was a most painful scene. Five minutes before the curtain fell on the last act we saw that something had happened. The blood was falling from Charles Warner's hand in torrents, and the plucky actor was getting paler and paler under his "make-up," and swaying to and fro in evident agony. But, like all nervous, excitable, and sensitive men, Charles Warner is a "good plucked one." When the curtain fell the actor fell also in a dead swoon, from pain and loss of blood. It was a miracle that the popular actor did not die that night. It was touch and go. But happily his life was spared, and the grim reminder of the accident is a stiff joint of the middle finger on the left hand. He has never been able to bend the knuckle since.

But now that we know that to inflict a deadly injury of the kind on your companion means homicide, what an awful complication occurs when the combatants are not friends in real life, but avowed enemies. Suppose they could be proved to be having a row, and wrangling and swearing at one another before they went on to the stage, it would in that event go very hard with the unfortunate actor who stabbed his companion, though it might have been pure accident all the same.

I remember Tom Robertson telling me a story of the kind that actually happened at Cremorne, or some public gardens of that pattern. Two acrobats who were sworn friends were accustomed to make a slight ascent from the ground outside the car of a balloon. When some hundreds of yards from the ground, the one swinging by the other's hands, they used to scramble back into the car. One night, just before the ascent, the acrobat who held the other by the hands discovered in a dark corner of the ground his friend kissing the elder acrobat's wife. Boiling with indignation, he did not say one word, but slunk silently away. The ascent was made as usual, and when a hundred yards from the ground the elder acrobat, who had the life of the younger one literally in his hands, taunted him with his perfidy. "You kissed my wife, did you? then down you go!" "For God's sake, Jim, have mercy." "No! no! down you go!" He released his hands, and down went the younger acrobat with a dull thud, stone dead amongst the appalled dancers. Verdict: Accidental Death! No one but the guilty woman knew the true secret of that awful tragedy in real life.

Chinese Reminiscences.

THE presence in England of that "rare old bit of China," Li Hung Chang or Li Chung Tong or Tang, whichever the great Ambassador chooses to be called, reminds me of the interesting time I spent in the wonderful country of China. I suppose I am one of the very few who, having seen China and Japan, was vastly more interested in the former country than in the latter. From the time our ship steamed into the lovely harbour of Hong Kong to the hour we left this hospitable port, bound for Kobe, I never had a dull moment. The weather was no better here than in Japan, quite as cold, quite as bleak, quite as piercing with its ghastly north-east winds, but each step I took in China gave me new interest in this astonishing country. I don't care where it was, in the native quarters of Hong Kong and Shanghai, at the festival time of the New Year, in the marvellous streets of Canton, a sight unequalled all over the world, in joss houses, in gambling houses—for John Chinaman is an inveterate gambler—on execution grounds, in prisons, in schools, and in cemeteries, the word China spells for me interest and astonishment at every corner. And then John Chinaman is a humorist and a wag. He amused me wherever I went. He is a sad rascal in all commercial transactions and would cheat his own grandfather, but had it not been for John Chinaman, who came every morning into my room at Yokohama—they are the traders even in Japan—to tempt me with wonderful stuffs, to sell me everything I did want,

and everything I didn't want, to manicure my finger nails or toe nails, or to cut my hair, I should not have known what laughter meant in Japan. They talk of the "merry little Jap," I should say here's to the great merry owner of the pigtail! The Chinaman is essentially a man of business. In all the best European houses a "comprador" or general agent is absolutely necessary. He may rob a little "on his own," but he will not allow anyone else to rob you. In fact it is like the courier system when travelling, the courier will look after himself, but in the end he is the best bargain for the capitalist.

We had a delightful time in Canton, to my mind the most interesting city in the world. We were pioneered about on land by "Ah Cum," a celebrated guide and counsellor, who naturally knows Canton by heart, and at sea by "Susan," a squat little Chinese woman, many-wintered, experienced, who is the guide, connoisseur, head cook, and bottle-washer of the only hotel in Canton. Susan, like so many of her countrywomen in Canton, has spent half her life on a boat. *Terra firma* she has never known, except for business purposes and for stretching her short little legs. Half the population of Canton live in boats. There are streets of boats, roads of boats, squares of boats, courts and alleys of boats, so it is small wonder that the Chinese women do nearly all the men's work on board the junks and "sampans." It was lucky that an experienced guide like the faithful Susan—who, by the way, has a charming daughter, far more charming than any Japanese native I ever met—took me under her gracious protection, for I would defy any mortal man to find his way for ten minutes together in the crowded, jostling, screaming, evil-smelling, maddening, blind alleys, called streets, in the wild "inferno" known as Canton. If "Hades" has an existence it must be something like Canton.

We had come home from a tremendous day, spent with immense fatigue in old Canton, a native city of Chinese,

barred and bolted against all Europeans after nightfall, unless they were in a mood for being stabbed and done for in the dark. We had seen treasure-houses of art, curiosities, and embroideries which made the eyes water and, even now, the memory ache. If I had happened to possess a spare £100 when in Canton I might have bought goods with it which would have realised £1,000 at Christie's, but your wily Chinaman does not give credit under any temptation. We had visited foul prisons, fouler execution grounds —literally "Aceldamas" or fields of blood; we had seen heads of decapitated Chinamen, tombs where dainties were spread out in a vestibule of the mortuary chamber, lest the wandering soul might occasionally be hungry; we had been all maddened with the din, and poisoned with the smells of Canton, and got home to sit out an entertainment given at the hotel by a very clever young fellow, Mr. Freear, who happens to be the brother of the equally brilliant young lady who has recently astonished all London with her singing of "Sister Mary Jane's Top Note," but even then we had, according to the rigorous programme enforced upon us, something more to do in Canton.

Susan arrived at the steps of the hotel at an hour verging on midnight with her "sampan." And with Susan arrived her pretty daughter, who, to the utter disgust of my companions, took me under her special care. I had treated Susan and Susan's daughter to seats at a cheap Chinese theatre down river in Canton during the afternoon, and I firmly believe, from the devotion that she showed to me personally, that Susan's daughter wanted to go upon the stage. Whenever in life my vanity—which is immense—has been particularly tickled by some kindly female sympathy, I have only to "try back" and discover it has something to do with the stage, and the theatrical advancement of the lady who pretends—feebly pretends—to take an interest in me. When a sweet letter comes unasked, and unexpected, I know full well that the fair correspondent is

about to appear on the stage, or has a brother who has a friend, a play, or a grandfather who wants a pension for having written a play. At any rate the "gush" is not personal to myself, but apparently important to whosoever desires the favour. I can, therefore, only conclude from the devotion of Susan's daughter towards me, that the daughter of Susan required some particular favour from me—perhaps to puff her mother's "sampans" or write up "Susan," Heaven knows!

At any rate, Susan and her mother wanted us to see the Chinese "flower boats," those luxurious floating palaces, wherein mandarins, high officials, prime ministers, Li Hungs, and Li Changs of every description forget the cares of office and the efforts of domesticity in simple, abandoned ease, and unbridled dissipation. It was a bitter cold night, half sleet, half frost, and Susan's daughter—bless her—saved my life on that memorable occasion. It was pitch dark, and as we emerged from the lighted sampan and scrambled up on a filthy gangway, my foot slipped on a block of half frozen water, and in another second I should have been lost in the swift-flowing river. But Susan's daughter caught me by the coat tails and landed me safely. We were standing at the door of a very gorgeous "flower boat" (it belonged to one of the chief admirals of the Chinese Navy), and that reckless Susan's daughter tempted me to go in and win. She nudged me, and seized my elbow. "You are a writer," she said; "you describe everything about China; describe this. Be bold; send in your card!" I consulted my friends. Their verdict was: "Nothing venture! nothing win!" I sent in my card, and described myself. The Lord High Admiral, who spoke English perfectly, would be delighted to see all of us. In we went, and I never remember to have seen a more luxurious palace. Every luxury was at our hands, the choicest fruits, the rarest flowers, the best of wines and cigars, wax lights, Eastern couches, and singing girls in

profusion. The greater part of the Lord High Admiral's guests were drowsy with opium, and had scarcely a caress for the songsters with painted cheeks and vermilion lips, and dabs of gold plastered over the skin. Here we sat, here we laughed, here we talked until the small hours of the morning. They brought us round scented pipes which we were bound to smoke, and curious dishes of rats and mice which we were bound to eat, and rare fruits which we were bound to taste, and about daybreak we got back to the hotel, after our first fatal, reckless night on a Chinese "flower boat." As to the Lord High Admiral, we were told that he and his friends, when free from the fumes of opium, would continue this debauch for about a fortnight, and after that he would return to the Chinese Admiralty, and to the embraces of Mrs. Lord High Admiral. These Chinese flower boats are curious institutions, but possibly if they took Li Hung Chang up the Thames from Surbiton to Oxford, he would find that Western life is not after all so very different from life in the East. They call them flower boats at Canton; we call them house boats in old England.

A Word for Poor Children.

THERE is no sound to me more beautiful, at lovely summer-time, than that of the shrill delighted scream of little children driving away in vans for a day in the country. They pass our windows in the early morning, a dozen van loads of them, yelling, shouting, waving little flags, happy as little kings and queens, never dreaming that the day will die and the pleasure must come to an end. Why should they? But there is ever a sorrowful reverse side to this picture. I pity from my heart the little children who see the vans depart, who are left on the hot London pavement, who have no holiday in store for them, the children just as good as those driving away to Epping, or Bushey, or Hadley Wood, but children who are neglected and have no friends. If I were a rich man I would devote part of the good things God had given me to procuring one holiday at least for the children in my immediate neighbourhood. I would hunt them out and make them have the one day's happiness they deserve, poor dears. It is then when I feel so powerless, and anxious to let others enjoy what I enjoy myself, that I think of Fresh Air Funds, and Buttercup and Daisy Funds, and holiday outing funds of every description, and wish I could be a millionaire and ask my friend Mr. John Kirk, of the Ragged School Union, to organize a children's holiday on a scale never yet dreamed of. Yes, we ought to do something more for the children, more even than

has already been done by good Mr. Pearson with his Fresh Air Fund, and it will not be difficult, I will answer for it, to find the organization that will aid many kind, charitable hearts.

"Before the beautiful year grows old,
And sunlight fades upon sea and land,
Whilst fields have colour and gardens gold,
And holiday crowds move hand in hand;
When over the meadows they toss the hay,
And poppies appear in the waving wheat,
When the silent forest is passing sad,
And the breath of summer is piercing sweet;
When a sigh goes forth from the working town,
And a whisper comes from the fields and hills,
And the whirl of wheels for an instant stops,
And the pace is over that cures or kills:
Tis then, my Brothers, and Sisters too,
We each of us owe a tremendous debt,
When we hurry away from the London roar,
And leave the eyes of the children wet;
A debt we owe, and it must be paid
To the utmost letter—I'll tell you why,
The summer brings sorrow to way-worn feet,
And this is the reason the children cry!"

So thinking of the children, and as it was a lovely summer afternoon, we thought we would drive down to Bushey Park, through romantic old Chiswick and Kew, through Richmond over the bridge, past Teddington, where Pope wrote and Peg Woffington is buried, and so on to the Chestnut Avenue full of fruit, and under whose noble trees the deer and fawn scamper about, reminding one of the Forest of Arden. Then from the beautiful Avenue outlook room at the famous "Greyhound Hotel" at Hampton Court we saw all the children enjoying themselves to their hearts' content, feasting and playing, gathering wild flowers, feeding the deer as tame as kittens until, fairly tired out, they clambered on to the drags and vans and waggonettes when the sun was setting: and left the

Park, the Avenue, the lovely Hampton Court Gardens, the flowers and the river terrace "to darkness and to me.' It was a delightfully peaceful end to a very busy day.

But it was to me extremely interesting on other grounds, for I found, to my surprise, that our gracious and hospitable hostess, who has made the house so deservedly popular, was a very old friend of mine, once well-known in the world of song. Mrs. Caulfield is none other than that great public favourite, Constance Loseby, with the beautiful voice of wondrous register, whose singing of "Cherry Ripe" and Shield's "Thorn" are things that once heard are very seldom forgotten. To have heard Miss Poole sing "Wapping Old Stairs," and Miss Constance Loseby "The Thorn" are things to be remembered with pride. Here to the "Greyhound" come many of her companions in art in days of long ago, and they ever find a welcome from the good-hearted hostess and her pretty and accomplished daughter, who has inherited from her clever mother the rare gift of song.

Motor Cars, Cabs and Coaches.

I AM not likely to forget the dreadful Saturday when the motor cars, smothered with mud, arrived in the darkness of the evening on the King's Road, Brighton. Having seen the last of the stage coaches, I thought it would be interesting to see the very first of the motor cars, which are destined, I suppose, to make life in town and in the country more hideous than it is at present. It may be prejudice, it may be obstinacy, it may be anything you like, but if I could live for a thousand years—and I do not want to do anything of the kind—I never should prefer a motor car of any shape or design to the stage coach that years ago passed the great gates of my old school at Marlborough, every morning, punctually at twelve o'clock. You must know that the principal, and certainly the most picturesque, house of the school buildings at Marlborough was, once upon a time, the "Castle Inn," one of the most celebrated coaching inns of the famous Bath Road. It must have been, indeed, a glorious inn in the old days, with its grand entrance, its panelled walls, its great oak staircases, and its splendid rooms, all of which exist to this day, for it would be vandalism to pull down or touch the "Old House" at Marlborough College. Yes, there it stands, just as it stood when it was the "Castle Inn," with its wilderness, its bowling green, its old world terraces, its dormer windows, and its ancestral air. So it was fitting that the last coach should pass the gates of Marlborough

School. The coach was driven by a cheery and very popular and good fellow, one Jack Sprawson, and the coach ran from Hungerford, which had a railway station, right through the heart of the lovely Savernake Forest, and so past our school along the great Bath Road to Devizes.

And we had one more relic of the past coaching days at Marlborough between the years 1852 and 1860, besides the dear old Bath coach and Jack Sprawson, and the touches it gave to my imaginative nature, longing, as I did, when the Bath coach passed by the gates, to cling on behind, to jump up on the roof, to be taken or driven anywhere, anywhere, out of the dull tedium of being "put up to construe," or fagging at that dreadful task called repetition; to see something of the world, to be in the heart of the country.

Well! the other relic of the old coaching days was "Surgery Bill." He had been a post boy connected with the old "Castle Inn," at Marlborough, and there he had remained on when the Inn was dismantled and turned into a public school. His blue jacket, and buckskin breeches, and spurs, and white beaver hat, had been lost long ago, and the old post boy was nicknamed "Surgery Bill," because he became the faithful attendant of our kind-hearted medical attendant, Dr. Fergus. "Surgery Bill" used to arrange the cough mixture—oh! how beastly it was!—and attend on the Scotch doctor like a faithful Quasimodo. He was bent double, as all old post boys were bound to be, and as all modern cyclists will, inevitably, be if they scorch and turn their spines into a bent twig. The action of posting with the spine eternally bent made "Surgery Bill," when I knew him, a doubled-up old man. This will be the fate of scorching cyclists. When I left Marlborough in 1859, "Surgery Bill," the old post boy, was still careering round the Court, always bent double. I suppose he is dead. I never heard anything to

the contrary. He was about seventy in 1859, and if he is living now ought to be the grandest centenarian of the age. But no human being has, according to the old adage, seen a dead post boy. So "Surgery Bill" may be still wandering about the precincts of Marlborough along with "Slender Bill," who stoked the big fires in the bigger school rooms, and was a general favourite.

But it was a dreadfully disgusting and depressing day when the motor cars arrived at Brighton. The "jolly old sun" never gave them his blessing. It was dull, foggy, and dismal enough in London. It cleared up a bit, and the sun tried to shine at Redhill, but when the train steamed into Brighton station I wished I were safely home in my study, with books, a pipe, and a consoling fire. When it does blow at Brighton straight off the sea, then Heaven protect the wanderer! I spent my afternoon dodging about between one smoking room and another. I lunched at the "Old Ship," and got wet through trying to brave the tempest between the "Old Ship" and the "Grand Hotel." There, from the smoking room window, I saw the arrival of the first be-draggled, mud-bespattered motor cars, and then I got wet through again between the "Grand" and the "Metropole," for the tempest changed its course and came rushing along from Hove in order to lash me in the face. I was sick of the motor cars and all their ways, so I quickly got into a damp fly—a damp Brighton fly—and arrived in London to find the weather as abominable as in Brighton, and not a cab to be had for love or money. On the Saturday I arrived at the Victoria Station by the Brighton line. Not a cab to be had. On Sunday I arrived in the evening by the Continental Mail from Calais, by the London, Chatham and Dover Line. Not a cab to be had for bribes or curses, in spite of the arrogant protest that all the railway companies provide cabs for the public. They do nothing of the kind. I never saw a sadder scene than the arrival of a crammed train at Victoria full of foreigners and luggage,

not one of whom was able to find a cab in the pouring rain.

When I spoke just now about returning from Brighton on one day and Calais on another and finding no cabs at Victoria Station on either occasion you must have been a little puzzled. Well, it all happened as follows :—The Brighton Saturday, with the wind, the rain, the tempest, the motor cars, and the damp enthusiasts gave me the shivers. It seemed as if the sun would never shine again. I arrived at Victoria like a sponge, cold and miserable, and got between the blankets as soon as I could. Now here is a wrinkle. In this dangerous changeable weather never sleep between the sheets. Try a blanket bed instead. The luxury drives off colds and rheumatism. Lo ! and behold ! when I awoke on Sunday morning it was the loveliest November day I have ever seen in this variable climate. The sun was shining like a May morning. The dull and depressed air had left the London streets, and all the world seemed in a good temper.

As there had been no Saturday *première* and work was not very pressing, we were speculating how to spend the day. Should it be a drive to Richmond, Hampton Court, or Stanmore ? To our surprise a cab drove up to the door that eventful Sunday morning, and out of it jumped an old friend. "What do you say to a French breakfast ?" were the first words he uttered as we greeted him, soon after ten o'clock. "Very jolly indeed." "Come on, then ?" "What do you mean, old fellow, it is not time to breakfast yet, surely ?" "I say it is, and you have no time to lose." "But where are we to go for the French breakfast—to Verrey's, the Trocadero, the Café Royal ! Where shall we meet you at, twelve or one ?" "Well," said our friend with a knowing wink, "I think the best place for a French breakfast is France !"

So, to cut a long story short, we found ourselves before the clock had struck eleven at the Holborn Viaduct Station.

A comfortable carriage had been reserved for us, the sun was shining, we were all very jolly with conversation, chaff, and *The Referee*, and before we knew where we were we had left Chatham and its curve, Faversham with its Ramsgate, Margate, and Broadstairs excursionists far behind. We had whizzed passed empty hop fields and arrived at the Shakespeare Cliff at Dover.

One of the merry trio had expressly stipulated that if there were a ripple on the surface of the sea that the trip should be confined to Dover Town. Her programme was a lunch at the "Lord Warden," now one of the celebrated Gordon Hotels, and extremely popular with the general public as well as with brides and bridegrooms; and a drive afterwards to Folkestone to see the landslip or to pretty St. Margarets. But our enthusiastic companion was not to be baffled. "There," he said, as he pointed enthusiastically to the calm sea bathed in sunshine, and shouted "Thalassa! Thalassa!" from the carriage window, "You could not be ill if you tried!" So the poor victim, who never really looked very happy, I am bound to say, all day, yielded with a shudder, and the two abominably selfish and brutal men had it all their own way.

We went on board the very best Packet of the new English Continental service. There was no question of cabins, for it was as warm as summer on deck. The air exhilarated us. We saluted the passing steamers, and in little over an hour we were all comfortably at lunch in the restaurant of the new and improved Calais station. And an excellent lunch it proved to be, the sea breezes having quickened the appetite. A capital Bouillon was followed by a dish of "tripe a la mode de Caen." Then came a cold partridge and a salad, and some Camembert cheese. After that, coffee and cigars. For a good hour-and-a-half we were left alone in peace. The French and German travellers were on their way to Paris or Cologne. All too soon the return train from Paris arrived, and we

were soon once more on board the same steamer that had taken us over to Calais. But the sea was not so kind. It is a different thing crossing the Channel with the wind in your face instead of at your back. But it was not disagreeable, except to the poor victim, who had to hide during the home journey in a cabin. One or two waves from a cross sea smacked us in the face rather rudely when we thought we were in shelter; but Dover was reached again before sunset, with no very great inconvenience to any of us, and, certainly, a draught of health had been drained by all. A brief journey back to London, and an inevitable doze after the excitement of this rapid journey to France, and we arrived back before dinner time at cabless Victoria station. There we might have remained all night waiting for these so-called "privileged" cabs, which never appeared; so there was no alternative but to take an omnibus, by which tortoise-like conveyance we arrived back to dinner at the home we had left at a quarter to eleven o'clock in the morning, having breakfasted in London, lunched in France, and returned to dinner in the Great Metropolis.

Boyhood Days.

WHEN I was a very little lad going backwards and forwards every day to a school situated in Theberton Street, Islington, a school kept by a rather celebrated Dominee of the old school, one George Darnell, the author of a series of copy books, which I believe are used to this very day, I indulged in a rather curious mental game of my own. It was a game due to an imaginative nature. I hated the school; the boys bullied me, and stole my marbles; I was terribly afraid of George Darnell, who was incurably lame, walked with the aid of two stout sticks with difficulty, with which he belaboured his dull and ignorant pupils, and I was about as miserable as a little lonely London lad could be. So when I started "creeping like snail unwillingly to school" from my father's house, I put myself into a kind of dreamland, and imagined I was somewhere else. In fact, it was a game of "make believe," so bowling my iron hoop along, a hoop that I always regarded as my faithful dog and companion, and dragging after me, with difficulty, a huge blue-watered merino

bag, which contained my school books and modest luncheon, I pretended to myself that I was anywhere but in London. The dismal Wharf Road, City Road, became a country lane; Dodd's dust heap, which I passed daily, and was frightened out of my life by the hideous women dressed as men with hats and trousers, became a green hill; the Shepherdess Fields were, in my imagination, a kind of Forest of Ardennes, and merry Islington exactly the place it must have been when John Gilpin, that "citizen of credit and renown," rode through it on his way to Edmonton to meet his expectant wife and family. My plan was to disbelieve the hideous present, the imminent school, the irritable head master, the horrors of the inevitable day, and to transport myself into the sunniest places and scenes of my little life.

I had been happy, very happy, at the then old world village of Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire, where I lived a simple recluse with two old maiden aunts. There was everything at Stony Stratford to delight a kind of David Copperfield little boy. First, there was a library with some rare old books. I delighted in Rowlandson's and Gibray's caricatures, though I did not understand them a bit. And I loved Dr. Syntax; and I shrewdly suspect that I must have sniffed out Smollett and Fielding. And then at the end of the garden was an old deserted coach-house with an ancient cabriolet preserved there, and with this huge toy I used to play for hours alone, pretending I was guard, coachman, and passenger, all rolled into one. The smell of that old coach-house in the Stony Stratford garden I shall never forget. It smelt of apples. And a very good reason, too, because in a loft overhead was stored away all the fruit from this dear old world garden. But there were other delights at Stony Stratford. There was the walk to Passenham, over the fields, where, at the Rectory, I made the acquaintance of the last of the old hunting parsons, one Loraine Smith, who wore his

"pink" under his surplice when the hounds were to meet, and gabbled over the early morning service. He seemed to me the picture of a "fine old English gentleman—one of the olden time"—but he rather alarmed me because he would "row" the servants at dinner time. But that was a very common occurrence in those days. There was invariably a scene with the servants, and these scenes acted on my nerves long before I was ten years old. And then I loved Castle Thorpe, where there was a farm owned by some dear friends of ours; and I was particularly partial to one old, white stone house in the centre of Stony Stratford, for there lived a jolly old doctor, and the jolly old doctor had a strawberry garden, to which I had a free right of entry, and he had also a lovely little daughter, with whom I was desperately in love. So Stony Stratford became one of my dream memories as I walked day after day to my miserable school.

And I was happy also at Barking—old Barking and Ilford in Essex, which were very different places then to what they are now. In order to arrive safely at Barking I was deposited on a coach that started from the Bull Inn in Aldgate. My host at Barking was the curate of the old Barking Church, which boasted a curfew bell, and he was related to a delightful family who inhabited Ilford Hall, a splendid manor house with a glorious garden. But the attractions to me were not wholly the garden or the manor house. The family was a large one, and it contained four of the very loveliest girls I had ever seen or imagined could have existed. They ranged from about sixteen to three or four-and-twenty, and as I was under ten I was naturally madly in love with them all. I know they delighted to make me blush, and chaffed me and made me desperately jealous, and then they made it up again by kissing me all round; so, of course, Ilford Hall and its inmates were one of my midsummer memories which started when the home door closed behind my back, and from

which I awoke with a start when I got round the corner of Theberton Street by Gibson Square, and my hand was on the handle of the much-dreaded school-house door. I remember that I was so terrified when I did open the door lest I should find George Darnell, with his black alpaca coat and crutches, sprawling on one of the benches of the playground, when without more ado, he would stop me and put me on to construe Ovid's Metamorphosis, that I was compelled to circumvent him by getting to school before the old gentleman turned up. But this pious intention led me into another romance. When I arrived I did not find an empty schoolroom at all, for a sweet little girl, the daughter of the second master, anticipated me, and she prepared for me delicious hot coffee and rounds of toast, and sat at my feet whilst I told her stories, and I brought her lollypops and bunches of flowers, and, of course, I fell in love with the sweet little schoolmaster's daughter. I was under ten, but, as you may guess, very susceptible to kindness from the gentler sex.

These day dreams had their drawbacks. I always wonder I was not run over in the streets or stolen for the sake of my clothes by one of Mr. Dodd's dreadful dust-heap women. By the way, Mr. Henry Dodd, the Hoxton Dust Contractor, was the original of Dickens' "Golden Dustman," and I fancy that he had something to do with the founding of the Royal Dramatic College at Woking, which was such a dreadful failure in the days of Benjamin Webster, who heartily believed in it. But really I was so absorbed in my day dreams that I scarcely knew what was going on around me. The clerks coming citywards from Islington looked upon me as such a punctual guide that they set their watches by me. One of them—he was always running, and I used to think of him as "Running Jack"—must have taken a great interest in this strange, pale-faced dreamy little lad. I suppose by my punctuality I must have got him out of

many a scrape at the City office, for one morning I found him running away at the top of his speed as usual, when suddenly he stopped before me and thrust a parcel into my hand. "Good boy! Been to see your master, Theberton Street, Old Darnell. Gives you a splendid character. Take this. Go on and prosper," and away he started again at a breakneck pace, leaving me open-mouthed with astonishment. When I opened the parcel I found a lovely little Shakespeare, beautifully bound, and inside the inscription, "From an Unknown Friend."

So now that I am in London, and forced to remain there, whether I like it or not, saying farewell to all my friends who are off to the Riviera and the sunshine, preparing for a good three months among the flowers, instead of in the fogs, I, too, can indulge in a day dream as of old, and make believe that I also am booked for the Mediterranean, with no more chance of catching cold or bearding the influenza in its den until the spring-time comes. In my dreamland Riviera sketches I must include that dear delight of other days, the Club train. Why, oh, why was it ever taken off? Why did it not pay? It was the bounden duty of every Englishman to support it. By means of the Club train one winter, without disturbing my current work in the least degree, I visited the Riviera and back again three or four times a month! This was my plan. I took Friday as my starting point. Before the Club train started on Friday afternoon I had got through a good day's work. I joined it at Victoria when the day's work was over. When the evening papers had been read through we were at Dover. A long cigar occupied one to Calais. The train had scarcely started from Calais when dinner was served, and if you fell in with cheerful companions, dinner was scarcely over before Paris was reached. Then a long sleep and you were nearing Marseilles. By midday on Saturday you were at your destination, and back in time for the theatres on Monday

evening. This journey I took three times in one month without the slightest fatigue and with very considerable satisfaction to myself. But there are certain times in a man's career when he will do anything with an object at the end of it, and we all know what that object usually is —not gambling, but something quite as exciting.

Prudes on the Prowl.

IS it not enough to make sane men and women sick to read the evidence, in the matter of Music Halls, of the spies and agents of the "Social Purity Branch of the British Women's Temperance Association?" Ye gods, what a mouthful! It is enough to take your breath away. Nothing like it has been invented since Dickens wrote Pickwick and described the celebrated Stiggins tea party in Brick Lane. It is enough to make one's blood boil to think that the pleasures and recreation of a nation are at the mercy of this "Poke-your-nose-into-other-people's-business Party," and that great enterprises are to be jeopardized, year by year, by these nasty, dirty-minded people, who go to the Oxford and the Empire in order to be accosted, and are paid by their unclean societies in order to gloat night after night over what they are pleased to call obscene! Are the liberties of a great people to be threatened because a man has the effrontery to stand up and say that a nude figure—the very purest and most beautiful thing in art—shocks him! But the public does not know the depth of the degradation of this Social Purity craze. A few years ago, when the mania was first started, I was approached by a prominent member of the "Poke-nose Society," who wanted me on the instant to write an article on the Amusements of the People. Somehow or other, he had got it into his head that I was a rigid, austere, and unbending Puritan who was as dead on pleasure as on Rats!

I at once saw his object, and was determined, like Brer Rabbit, to "lie low." So by careful and judicious cross-examination I managed to extract from this gentleman the whole plan of the Social Purity campaign. It was simply and solely this: "The Death and Extermination of All Pleasure!" When he said this, I assure you it nearly took my breath away.

"What," I said, "do you mean to say that you would abolish Pleasure of every kind. Put down Amusements by Act of Parliament?" "Absolutely," he replied without flinching or turning a hair. "We consider that *All Pleasure is immoral!*"

This, I may remark, took place before the *Pall Mall Gazette* exposé, and long before the Mrs. Chant business at the Empire. So the gentleman left me to write my article, which he imagined would take his line, that all pleasure is immoral. The magazine was going to press on the instant. I was to write my paper red hot. So, having a very valuable specimen precedent in the Old Testament, I ventured to bless pleasure instead of cursing it! There was no time to correct or alter a word. The religious magazine came out, and so did my pleasure-praising article. That was all I wanted. But my interviewer tore his hair, and never forgave me. Still, this only shows what the object of these people is, an object which, I rejoice to say, had its quietus from the *now* liberal-minded Amusements' Committee of the London County Council. Statues should be erected to men like Sir John Blundell Maple and Mr. H. H. Marks, who have forced their sound common sense through the ringed fence of this once very dangerous committee. At last we see daylight; and we did not take up the Empire cause in vain.

Do these people know or care what the amusements of the people were like in London before liberty chased selfish protection out of its stronghold? I have followed the amusements of the people as a public writer since the

year 1860. I can remember the time when the theatre managers of London prosecuted Charles Morton, the father of the music halls, for giving his patrons an entertainment called "Pepper's Ghost." Why? Because it had in it an element of drama. But since liberal-minded men like Sir Henry Irving, S. B. Bancroft, John Hare, Charles Wyndham, George Alexander, etc., have refused to put the protective law into action, what has happened? The general amusements of the people have improved by leaps and bounds. Decency, order, and good taste prevail, where lustful orgies existed before. These nasty-minded people who sneak about grubbing up garbage and refuse, as dogs do in an Eastern city, would send us all back, if these pestilential heresies were not combated, to the dreadful days of "Sam Hall," and such-like songs, and to the abominable scenes at the Cider Cellars and the Coal Hole. I should like some of the members of the "Special Committee of the Social Purity Branch of the British Women's Temperance Association" to have been present with their reporters' note books at the Cider Cellars, in Maiden Lane, or the Coal Hole, in the Strand, in the year 1860, when Baron Nicholson, a foul-mouthed but clever rascal, tried a Judge and Jury case, with one Brooks as the Protean witness! All this vileness was stopped in London by free trade in amusements. Start protection once more, and we shall get back to the dirt and iniquity of the past. For well or ill the people will be amused. And I for one prefer healthy, open pleasure in the palaces that are built for us to the dark and dirty vice in the cellars and caves of long ago. In the year 1860 we went downstairs into a hole for our amusements. Now we go upstairs into the light and air. That is just the difference. And when credit is to be given for the success of this fight that has culminated recently, in the utter rout, defeat, and disgrace of the Social Purity people, do not let us forget in our vote of thanks—first, the editor

and proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, who have never budged an inch, but have fought foot by foot and inch by inch; secondly, the editor and proprietor of the *Era* newspaper, who has fought the good fight of free trade in amusements for thirty years past; and lastly, "Honest John Hollingshead," who knows more about the question than any man living. And he is hale and hearty at nearly seventy years of age.

A Bundle of Old Letters.

I AM sitting at a desk to-day at which I have written for over thirty years. It was the first bit of furniture I ever purchased when I broke away from home and established myself in a top room of the old Arundel Club in Salisbury Street, Strand, of which delightful place I was for many years the honorary secretary. The once familiar street, and the old club-house overlooking the river, have been swept away to make room for the Strand Hotel Cecil, but the memories of delightful days, longer nights, cosy dinners, and cheery companions, still endure. They would make a huge volume of early recollections. Tom Robertson, ever sparring with Leicester Buckingham; dear old E. L. Blanchard, with his romances and long clay pipe; Horsley in the tank and imitating monkeys in thunderstorms; Matthew Forster, the oracle and law-giver; cheery Horace Green, and learned, artistic Deane; Belford, who never went to bed, and Charles Stone, ever writing plays which were never produced; Sam Joyce, Jonas Levy, and kindly, hospitable Horace Brandon—how little did I dream I should ever call him father-in-law; faithful and ever-lamented Peter Hardy; Charles Coleman, with his wondrous power of narrative and keen sense of humour; Arthur Sketchley, my old friend and god-father—good heavens! I could fill a volume with my Arundel Club recollections; many of them buried deep in the old desk at which I still write.

As for the dear old desk, I wonder that it has not cracked its sides long ago and tumbled to pieces, for it

contains, in its overstocked recesses, proof positive of all the strife in which I have been incessantly engaged since the year 1860, when I started work in grim earnest. Letters of hate, letters of love, fierce denouncing letters, beautiful consoling letters, letters calling down the vengeance of heaven on my head, letters thanking me for kindnesses done. There they all lie, side by side, higgledy-piggledy, writs and lawyers' letters, documents embracing the dear record of dead friends, and the tremendous record of an active fighting life.

Sometimes I am afraid to dive into this lucky and unlucky bag, whichever you choose to call it. As a rule the pain is greater than the pleasure. But I did so yesterday and this is what I pulled out. An old discoloured letter dated September 4th, 1869, and surmounted with the motto of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, which encircles the initials F. B. C., otherwise Frederic Balsir Chatterton.

The letter is rather interesting. It runs as follows :—

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,
September 4th, 1869.

SIR,—Some time ago Mr. Chatterton received a letter from you making a charge against a trusted servant of this Establishment; having investigated the matter, Mr. Chatterton instructed me to write a letter to inform you that your name was removed from the "Free List" and to request you to abstain in future from visiting his theatre—this letter, it appears from yours of the 2nd, did not reach you; I have therefore to repeat the request on this occasion; I have also, by Mr. Chatterton's direction, requested the Editor of the *Weekly Dispatch* to accredit some other representative of the paper, whenever he deems it desirable to notice the performance of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

Yours obediently,

JAMES GUIVER, Treasurer.

CLEMENT SCOTT, ESQ., Union Club, S.W.

And now I will explain the letter. I was at that time writing for the *Weekly Dispatch* and the *London Figaro*, so ably conducted by James Mortimer, and I was engaged in

a crusade against the inartistic ways of the National Theatre and other London establishments, desiring to uphold the new era of art, refinement, and good taste, rapidly showing to the front with the aid of the Bancrofts, Charles Wyndham, Henry Irving and many more. I was little more than a boy at the time, and it required considerable courage to fight this obstinate conservatism and stage protection single-handed. Chatterton was against me; Webster was against me until Fechter joined him at the Adelphi; George Vining "hungered for my head on a charger;" Charles Reade, a determined fighter, would have exterminated me, and it appears from the enclosed letters that I also fished out of my treasures that the Swanborough family were not very much attached to me later on in the year 1871.

Royal Strand Theatre,
January 26th, 1871.

MY DEAR SIR,—In reply to your favour of the 23rd inst., I must say that both the management and myself have been for some time under the impression that in your writings upon pieces produced at this theatre you were actuated by an unfriendly spirit, and we were certainly unable to account for the same. It has always been our endeavour to treat every member of the profession to which you belong with courtesy. I assure you that we seek straightforward and honest criticism, and do not fear blame if deserved; but in the criticism to which reference is made, I think, if you reperuse it you will find considerable redundant, not unnecessary abuse upon the management and artistes. I am glad, however, to find from your letter that you disclaim any ill-feeling towards us, and believe me to accept the explanation in the spirit in which it is given, and remain, as heretofore,

Yours very truly,
ARTHUR SWANBOROUGH,
Acting Manager for the Management.

CLEMENT SCOTT, ESQ.

It is ever thus. Managers are always right and critics ever wrong. If we don't like their plays, it is ill-feeling, or spite or animus. If we do like them we are the best and

fairest fellows in the world. If the plays are applauded by us, the criticisms are the fairest in the world; if they are hissed, it is "organized opposition." This is human nature, but it does not give the critic a bed of roses. It remains so to this hour, and will to the end of time.

However, as you will see, Chatterton not only tried to keep me out of his theatre, but was insolent enough to demand my dismissal from the post of dramatic critic to the *Weekly Dispatch*. Greater men, actors and authors, have done the same since then, and have been politely shown the door by independent editors. Finding he could do neither, he tried another dodge, for I do not believe, law or no law, that any manager could turn anyone out of a public theatre who is behaving himself. If I were turned out of the pit I would pop up into the gallery; if I were hunted out of the boxes I would descend to the stalls. The next dodge was to ensure my extinction by cutting off the theatrical advertisements. Now the proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, a Mr. Stiff, was very fond of theatrical advertisements; indeed, of all advertisements of whatsoever kind, but he had for an editor Mr. George Emmerson, a loyal and able journalist, who fought for me tooth and nail, and protested against the insolence of a theatre-manager dictating to a newspaper proprietor how to conduct his own business, and telling him what journalists he should employ. Mr. Chatterton got a thorough good snubbing, and was politely told to mind his own business; and precisely the same course was pursued the other day, when almost exactly the same thing occurred, I being impudently advised by a well-known manager, with a swollen head, to send a deputy to do my work, and hand my tickets on to somebody else, as fairness with me was out of the question. And this ineffable conceit is due to us all who have encouraged frogs to swell themselves into oxen. My experience is that editors and proprietors are loyal to the backbone to their staff, and the worst

thing a manager-actor or actress can do is to make an unjust complaint or insinuate motive. In all my traffic of the stage since 1860—37 years ago,—I have only found one editor who handed me over to the enemy without compunction. When managers, actors, actresses, act*or*-managers, and act*ing* managers write their own puffs, then, and not before, will friction between conceit and independence cease to exist.

Of the loyalty and good faith of the majority I could write pæans of praise, for they often served me to their life-long disadvantage. I have often told, and am never tired of telling, the story how brave James Mortimer was hissed for months at the theatre for words I had written, and which he would not allow me to acknowledge. Would you believe it, that unfortunate but loyal James Mortimer is still suffering from the consequences of his brave act of over twenty years ago? Wanting the other day some slight favour done in the matter of the production of a very excellent play, he was refused on the ground "that he was obnoxious to the pit and gallery." Well, I know my friends in the pit and gallery pretty well, having had many a brush with them, and suffered somewhat severely at their hands, but I am certain that they are not vindictive or wantonly cruel. They are hot-headed and impulsive sometimes, as we all are, but they forgive and forget. If James Mortimer wrote a good play to-morrow I am confident he would be generously applauded by pit and gallery alike, who allow bygones to be bygones. They don't hit a man when he is down after a brave struggle of twenty odd years. When the breeze is over they are the first to hold out the olive branch.

Criticism v. Personality.

HOW easy it is to get a hornet's nest about your ears by telling the simple truth about the art you love, and to which you have devoted the constant study and attention of a lifetime. Not long ago—in another place, as they say in the House of Commons—I happened to remark—and it is perfectly true, and I defy anyone to gainsay it—that just now the English stage is singularly destitute of artists of the first class: artists of power, passion and intensity: artists who have studied their art, and continue to study and practise it with devotion, earnestness and care. I went on further, and said that the hands of our best dramatists are, in a measure, tied, for the very simple reason that what they conceive cannot, as matters stand, be executed; that their ideas cannot have their proper fruition. Every country in the world suffers at one time or another from the same inevitable misfortune. Genius does not grow up in the night like mushrooms. It is a rare plant, indeed. But what I most earnestly desired to say, not from any personal motive whatever, but for the sake of the art in which we are, one and all, so interested, was that it is the cruelest injustice to the stage, and to dramatic art, to deck out the showy and clever amateur in the grand robes of genius, and to mistake, for first-class art and inspired genius, the showy goods of the clever but often ill-instructed amateur.

I am met by the most astounding fallacy, and the most ludicrous ineptitude. I am told that at no time in the history of the stage was the general public fonder of the theatre and dramatic art. Granted! Who, for one instant, doubted it? And who, may I ask, created that interest in the stage. Who fostered it and flattered it?

Who kept the theatre of this country alive and breathing? Why, the independent critics, who were earnest in what they said; who studied the drama, not in England only, but all over the world; and who, to their own personal inconvenience, told the truth so far as they knew, or believed it to be the truth. But, granted that there is a great living, and breathing, theatrical public, critics and connoisseurs all of them, how on earth does it follow that *because* there is a great love for the theatre, *therefore*, there *must* be a brilliant army of recruits for the stage? I cannot follow the argument in its boldness of assertion, or in any of its fallacious details. In my humble opinion, exactly the contrary has occurred. The love for the drama on the part of the public has *not* been followed by a brilliant, or even a capable body of recruits. Actors and actresses of the second class are taken at their own value, and are forced down the throat of the public by means of self-advertisement; not because they are great in any sense of the word, but because they blow their own trumpets. Without independence of criticism, we shall have artists of the third and fourth class claiming to wear the mantle of genius because the good-natured public takes them at their own valuation.

About the year 1863 I had exactly the same kind of battle to fight, and with it came the same inevitable abuse, plausibility, and misconception. I said then that the Shakspearean performances at Drury Lane and elsewhere were unworthy and inadequate. I said that such actors as Tom King, Creswick, Ryder, George Vining, and others, were not Shakspearean actors of the first class; and I say now, with as much boldness and as much sincerity, that our last Hamlet and our last Juliet were not Shakespearean performances of the first class, or anything like the first class. Our last Ophelia was the very best Ophelia I have ever seen, but the Hamlet and the Juliet were of the second class—if even that.

This is no personal matter at all. I have seen the gentleman who played Hamlet act with consummate art to admiration a character that suits him. But he is a master of character and eccentricity. As an actor he is certainly of the first class, but Hamlet is not in his nature. Romance is outside his province. Verse is not his medium. Where he would be effective and interesting he becomes dull, monotonous, and commonplace. Is it so wonderful after all that an actor who might make a first-class Iago or Iachimo might make a second-class and uninteresting Hamlet? For after all, these are not my opinions alone, they are shared by thousands of students of the stage who say over the dinner and supper table what I have the courage to say in print. Edmund Kean, Macready, Charles Kean, and many of the past era were not good in everything. They all had their successes and their failures. But I still hark back to my old contention that in their day there was an actor who could play Hamlet, and an actress who could grapple with the difficulties of Juliet. And they call me a pessimist, who am, in the matter of acting, an optimist to a fault, saying too much—far too much occasionally—of sudden freaks of originality in acting, and often spoiling with praise actors and actresses who get their chance, and proceed to fling it away untasted. The chance comes, actors or actresses embrace it. They make their success. Then what do they do? They don't go on, they don't advance, they don't study harder and harder, they don't work day and night as the Rachels and Bernhardts work when they ought to rest. No! They have made one success! That is enough! Where is the robe of Genius? Bring it out! It must be plastered on their shoulders whether it fits or not.

Why make all these questions of art mere personal matters, which they are not, or ought not to be. A lady may very well fail in Juliet, for want of training,

experience, teaching, temperament, or what not, but yet electrify an audience in a character that is inside her nature and observation. She does not cease to be a good actress by failing in Juliet, any more than the actor ceases to be a good actor because he fails in Hamlet. The mistake in both cases is, that they have unfortunately selected Hamlet and Juliet to fail in, instead of sticking to modern work, in which to succeed. But the students of the stage are not to be set down as pessimists, grumblers, croakers, praisers of the past, and so on, because they happen to know, by experience and study, how Hamlet and Juliet ought to be played. We, who criticise actors and actresses, can only do so from a high standpoint. Take the case of Ophelia. I have seen Kate Terry play the part! admirable! I have seen Ellen Terry play the part! most admirable! I have seen Florence Gerard, extremely clever! I have seen Milly Palmer, now Mrs. Bandmann Palmer! again very clever! But I still think the Ophelia of Mrs. Beerbohm Tree the very best I have ever seen. Again, Hamlet! Think of the Hamlets I have seen in every style and language. Phelps, Charles Kean, Barry Sullivan, Brooke, King, Fechter, Henry Irving, Wilson Barrett, Rossi, Salvini, Mounet Soully. The most picturesque was the Hamlet of Fechter. The most intellectual and Shakspearean was Henry Irving. But why should it follow that the rest of them were bad actors? not a bit of it! I own I did not like the Hamlet of Phelps, but he was inimitable as Job Thornberry and Sir Pertinax Macsychophant. I did not care for Charles Kean's Hamlet, but his Louis XI., and Louis dei Franchi, in *The Corsican Brothers*, were superb performances. I was not struck with Barry Sullivan's Hamlet, but I should dearly like, if it were possible, to see him again as Beverly in *The Gamester*. Mounet Soully's Hamlet sent me to sleep, at the back of the box, in spite of all his gesticulation and mad raving. But if your modern actor

or actress doesn't quite hit the mark as Hamlet or Juliet, they go into the corner, or sulk, or pipe their eye, and say that they "will not play again," and that it is very hard not to be taken for a genius, when they have made up their minds they are geniuses, or persuaded that they are by some intemperate mutual admiration society, that flatters them to their faces, and ridicules them, Hamlet, Juliet, and all, behind their backs.

Who on earth ever said that Forbes Robertson, Willard, and Beerbohm Tree, and Mrs. Kendal and Cyril Maude and Winifred Emery were not excellent artists? I know I have said that they were, again and again, and shall continue to say so, for I shall never be tired of the pleasurable task. Who wants anything better than the Buckingham of Forbes Robertson, or his Arthur Dimsdale in *The Scarlet Letter?* Who wants anything more delightful than the Judah, or the Cyrus Blenkard, or the dear old Professor of Mr. E. S. Willard? What could be better than the Macari, the Captain Swift, or the Iago of Beerbohm Tree? When shall we ever see a Black-Eyed Susan like Mrs. Kendal, or a Frou-Frou, or a Clarissa Harlowe like Winifred Emery? But it surely does not follow that they are all Hamlets, or Othellos, or Juliets, or Rosalinds, does it? And my only regret is that I don't, at the present, see scores of these wonderful recruits coming up to take their places. But they will come, and they will succeed if when they love their art they stick to it, and are determined to study and work hard, without which success on the stage is impossible. What is there pessimistic in all this? It is optimistic in the highest degree. Who on earth ever said that the drama was going to the dogs? All that was urged and argued was that actors and actresses of genius do not grow like blackberries on brambles, and that the tendency of the age is to elevate "golden mediocrity" into genius.

The discussion mainly arose on the acting in Mr.

John Davidson's fine version of Coppée's "Pour la Couronne." Nothing could have been better than the performances of Mr. Forbes Robertson and Mr. Charles Dalton. But it did seem strange that all the army of English actresses, trained veterans, recruits, and all, could not produce one to convey the snaky subtlety of Melitza, or the splendid dramatic power of Bazilide. Is it wrong or a crime to think of great actresses, when great parts come under consideration? We cannot bury our memories. We cannot deaden our experience. We cannot extinguish our knowledge for the mere idle purpose of flattering indiscriminately and recklessly. We must think when great plays and great parts arise of Bernhardt, and Favart, and Desclée, and Bartet, and Jane Hading, and Ellen Terry, and Ada Rehan, and in great dramatic moments we cannot put up with this "golden mediocrity." Bazilide is a superb character, but has she yet been touched, that is the question? Ought she to have been touched, with all our flourish of trumpets? That is another question never satisfactorily answered to my mind. And so I return, obstinately if you will, but convinced that I am right, to my old contention that it is idle to write fine acting powerful parts if there is no power forthcoming to do them justice. It may be the fault of the age, or the temperament, or heaven knows what! but I continually see fine plays and fine characters ruined again and again for want of power, electricity, thrill—all of which are supposed to be "bad form" by the wooden artists of this unemotional era. We have plenty of emulation, but where is the inspiration? But all will be well yet, if we are allowed to speak out our minds as experts on matters we have studied without turning every question of art into a personal matter. For myself, I love the art so much that I sacrifice friendship and personal comfort on the altar of art every year I live, and shall continue to do so until the end.

An Imaginary Journey.

PURSUING my favourite fancy of taking imaginary journeys and of making believe that I am far away from fogs and colds and east winds and rheumatic damps and chills, I will wander away now into dreamland. Nay, more, I want to hide myself somewhere far away from theatres and first-nights and ignorant amateur dramatists, who bombard one with gushing letters before their plays are produced, calling one an angel of light and leading, and turn round snapping and snarling like angry curs, and calling one a devil of darkness when their ambitious work is proved to be hopeless; far away from anonymous letter-writers, who do not even take the trouble to disguise their handwriting, and will soon be in the hands of the police; far away from pretentious and ill-bred people, School Board gentlemen, who are proved not to know the Greek alphabet, and probably could not translate "*qui s'excuse s'accuse*," even with the help of a little sister and a French dictionary; far away from these limpets and barnacles who stick on to the bottom of the dramatic ship, and who air their self-importance and advertise their ignorance until the very angels weep; far away from swollen managerial bladders, who are reduced to their natural pulp by the merest pen-prick; amateurs all of them, amateur managers, amateur actors, amateur authors, who actually disfigure and degrade the art they pretend to adorn. I want to get away from

them, so I will take an imaginary journey, and will go to the South of France, as I have not much time to spare before getting into harness again.

I did intend to go to Ceylon, for I saw a delightful trip advertised which would have kept me out of England until the apple trees were in blossom again, with a carpet of golden daffodils underneath the old gnarled boughs and branches. In that case I should have started at Tilbury, said good-bye to old Gravesend, faced the Bay of Biscay like a man, and stopped for the first time at Genoa, most delightful of Italian cities, clean, interesting, and—are we not ashamed of the statement in England?—brilliant with electric light from one end of the city to the other. I should not be long in Genoa before I took you off to the Campo Santo or Cemetery, where you would find the most beautiful collection of statuary conceivable, and the most realistic tombs and holy graves in the wide world. Then away to ship again, having tasted the best of maccaroni, washed down with Ovieto or Chianti, or possibly a bottle of that rare white Italian wine, which you may obtain to perfection in a little humble restaurant facing the great square of St. Peter's at Rome.

Our next stoppage on the way to the land of tea, coffee, and spices, would be Naples, and we must petition the captain to allow us to stay there for at least two or three days, as there is so much to see. If you are sick of board ship and don't care for the smell of "bilge water" and the chance of getting malaria or low fever in port, come with me to the "Hotel Vesuvio," just at the angle or promontory dividing the old Naples from the new. From here I started on my journey round the world in 1892, and at that time the hotel was kept by Signor Mella, whose brother was once the landlord of the "Greyhound Hotel" at Hampton Court, now owned by my old friend, Constance Loseby. Signor Mella, as you may imagine, is always glad to welcome English guests. Dear me! I was very

sad at the "Hotel Vesuvio" the last time I was there, for I had only just arrived from Rome, where I had been nearly murdered by a mad Italian Count for defending "lovely woman in distress," and do not know what I should have done without the friendly companionship and counsel of Herr Wilhelm Ganz, who was off to see a new opera by Mascagni at Milan, and was compelled to leave me to my solitude, for the P. & O. steamer "Bengal" was late, and all the overland passengers were waiting for her at Naples at the expense of the Company. At any rate, it is certain that the captain would remain in Naples long enough to allow us to visit Pompeii, next to the Taj Mahal at Agra one of the wonders of the world, for they are going on excavating and discovering every day, and have recently unearthed a huge amphitheatre perfect in form and decoration.

I never shall forget my astonishment when I first visited Pompeii, and was told to go upstairs in the little wayside inn, where I was lunching, pestered with murderous flies. At the top of the inn there was a little bridge, and then a pathway, and then a gate, and instead of looking down at Pompeii in a pit, as I imagined I should have to do, I had to look up, for behold! Pompeii was far above my head, and we were dwarfed by the proportions of the buried city, so superbly described in Bulwer Lytton's novel, "The Last Days of Pompeii," which I always thought would make a superb libretto for grand opera. And then, if the good captain were still indulgent, we would go up Vesuvius, a tedious and uninteresting journey, but, of course, it must be done at Naples or the "evil eye" will be upon you, not to be warded off by silver charms of pointing fingers. Far better to put yourself on a little steamer and be off to Capri or the Blue Grottoes, and see the exquisite female models that Sir Frederick Leighton loved to paint, and the steps of Ana Capri exactly as Barclay painted them, as

you will see by the engraving that hangs in a favourite corner of my little house, if you will only call and see me! Well, good bye to Naples; we must be off at last without seeing the Opera House, which, as ill luck will have it, is always closed whenever I come to the romantic city of beggars, squalor and song, *lazzaroni* and laziness, maccaroni and minstrelsy. Naples and Vesuvius and the lovely islands disappear from sight, and we are fairly off again, never to stop until we arrive at Suez on the famous canal.

I must stop here to register a protest. As we are having such a delightful trip it is surely no good to spoil the ship for a halfpenny worth of tar! Here we are close to Ismailia, where the ship might very well wait whilst we all took the train past the battle fields of Tel-el-Kebir, and arrived to our delight at Cairo. In that case I would have elected myself as conductor-in chief, and after resting a day or so at Shepheard's Hotel, the very best after all, and taken our seat on the delightful terrace, where is presented the most marvellous panorama that the eye has ever seen, we would have explored Cairo, new and old, visited the great Mosque on the Citadel, seen the dancing Dervishes, and, of course, had a long day at the Pyramids, and paid a visit to the Sphinx. We might take the ostrich farm on the way home, and I think I could have made friends with the Messrs. Cook, and arranged a one day's trip up the Nile, with the famous journey on donkeys to the lesser Pyramids in the desert. But I hear the warning voice of the captain of our Ceylon steamer, and we must really press on to Suez, most varied and disreputable of landing-stages, where you can be cheated and demoralised before you have time to say "Jack Robinson." It would be difficult to find a form of vice that is not suggested at Suez, so button up your pockets, if you take my advice, and avoid the pestilential touts who will see that you are promptly cheated at the gaming table, or rooked at billiards. I think that Suez in Egypt, and Saxon les Bains, as it once existed in Switzerland,

are the most outrageously and defiantly blackguard places I have ever entered. It is tedious work getting through the Suez Canal. The ditch is uninteresting, the scenery is hideous, and if you meet a vessel of any ordinary size you have to "tie up." This is done in a very primitive fashion. A sailor lands out of a little ship's boat, gains the shore, and, with a rope, he ties up whilst the other vessel passes. If she happens to stick in the mud—as often happens—it is, I need hardly say, more tedious still. Once safe out of the Suez Canal, I believe, according to the programme, we are to stop at Aden, the melancholy military station abhorred by the military man. I shall be glad of an opportunity of seeing Aden by daylight, for when I stopped there before it was at night, when, under the glare of the electric light, we were boarded by a lot of black devils and traders, who sold us baskets and feather boas and various other useless articles, for which fabulous prices were paid. Once safe away again from Aden, we do not stop until we arrive at dear, delightful Ceylon. Behold the G. O. H., or in other words, the "Grand Oriental Hotel," and mine host Raden, most delightful of companions, and the natives selling bad sapphires, worse rubies, and false lace under the portico, and the thieving birds in the hotel garden, and the kind of tropical heat that I suppose none of you have ever experienced before.

Oh! to be in Ceylon just at this moment; to see those terra-cotta roads, to leap into one of the Jinrickshas; to be whirled away here, there, and everywhere amongst the temples and exhibitions, and devil gods, and architecture; to rejoice in those lovely trees as tall as English elms, starred with yellow, scented flowers; to drive out in the cool of the evening through an alley of Cingalese babies crammed with rice, to the "Lavinia Hotel" on the seashore, the most perfect place outside Paradise; to dine there; to sleep there; to rest there; to wake up the next morning in a tropical climate freshened by the sea; to applaud the

little Cingalese larrakins for climbing to the top of a dreadful tree for a cocoanut; and to-morrow to start up country to the most heavenly country created by God. Shall I ever again see Kandy, or Newra Elyia, or the gorgeous tea estates of my dear friend, Thomas Lipton, at Dambateni, or know how to pick tea, three leaves and a bud, or see the gathered tea whirled down on a wire through space to the factory, or see the romance of tea from the bud and flower to the tea shop in Walworth or Newington Butts? Oh, I have so much to say about Ceylon! I have lived there. I should like to bless it once more ere I die.

But I must tell you all about Ceylon on another occasion, for I promised to take you to the South of France, and the train is waiting.

Nowadays we must be more moderate in our luxurious habits. The Club train does not exist, so there is no use crying over spilt milk. We start, say, at night, in order to get the benefit of that day's work in London that is so essential to many. All the tickets have been taken, so there is no bother about that, even at the railway station. In one convenient pocket is some English money, in the other a supply of French coin—for once across the silver streak tipping must begin, if comfort is to be assured.

The portmanteaus and the heavy things are all registered and done with. They will not be seen again until we arrive at our destination. The hand-bags have been carefully packed beforehand with a view to that dreadful night in the train. Each of us knows and understands our separate ideas of comfort and things we must have. If you want to travel comfortably there is no use in leaving anything to chance. The cabin on the boat, the double sleeping-berth, all must be secured beforehand, and sometimes when they are secured beforehand you do not get them—mind that. There is no use in arguing with the French official. He shrugs his shoulders and that is all.

But he takes a tip for selling your secured berth to somebody else. These are the fortunes of war. So we arrive at Holborn Viaduct, or Victoria, or Charing Cross, and, if there be time, dine there comfortably before starting. Having dined well, the journey to Calais is not so tedious as it otherwise would be. At Calais, if you had a blow and the sea has been smooth, you will be ready for a little light supper, and then, having supped, if the fates are favourable, you will sleep soundly all the way to Paris.

Now for a word of warning. When you arrive at Paris don't be persuaded by a brute who will bang open the door to get out of the train on a raw, chill morning, and drive across Paris to the Lyons and Mediterranean Railway. There is no need to do anything of the kind. There is no necessity to wake you from your slumbers, or bang open the door, for the carriage in which you are resting will go round by the Girdle Railway to the station from which you are to start. If you drive across Paris in one of those detestable and uncomfortable little omnibuses, with a dog on one knee and a parrot cage on another, you will be jolted to death over the stones among the market carts and melancholy, early-rising Paris, and arrive at the Mediterranean station a good hour or two before your time. There you must sit in a cold restaurant, only disturbed by the sleepy waiters arriving one by one, and amusing yourself by seeing how they methodically — always methodically in France—arrange the counter with fruit, and sweets, and goodies. The long day in the train is not at all unpleasant. You can look out of the window and delight in the change of scene just as children do. I am always a child looking out of the carriage window and imagining what kind of a life I should lead if I were destined to spend my days in that village or that town. Now if you have taken my advice you will have secured a bed for the night at the Railway Station Hotel at Marseilles. Two nights in a train is too much for human endurance,

and by the time you arrive at Marseilles you will be sick to death of the train, and dead beat into the bargain. A wire to the courteous proprietor of the hotel will have secured you a charming room overlooking the gardens. You step out of the railway carriage into the hotel. A supper is waiting for you in your room, a cheerful wood fire burning in the grate, and, oh, that delicious sleep in a bed again after all those hard cushions!

MEM.—Never travel anywhere without a soft pillow about a foot square. It makes all the difference between sleep and restlessness. You can buy the little pillow, chintz covered, anywhere for a few shillings. Never be without this friend of the journey. Next morning you wake up abroad—you know the feeling of waking up abroad, even at Marseilles. The sun is shining. Life is cheerful. Everyone seems happy. And after your little breakfast you can dawdle a bit, and stroll about the shops in the great streets, and drive along the quay, and lunch very well indeed (and inexpensively) at the swell restaurant, and arrive before dinner time at your destination among the palm trees, all standing staring in the bright electric light. There is a scent of roses and violets from the fields as you drive to the hotel on the hill. And the hotel proprietor comes out to greet you, and the waiters and chambermaids recognise you, and you find your old favourite room with the splendid view, and your table is set for you in the old corner of the *salon*, and you have had a hot bath, and you are dressed for dinner, and you dine in peace. And the cigar is smoked among the flowers and shrubs in the conservatory hall, and when you have gone out on the balcony and seen the marvellous panorama, and kissed one another, breathing the pure, sweet, flower-laden air, you turn in and sleep the sleep of the innocent in the Land of Flowers. Would to God I could be there now! But I am at home, fighting the Sewer Rats!

Reminiscences of Clement's Inn.

CLEMENT'S Inn! I notice that several memorial notices have been written of the curious old Inn-of-court by which one proceeded in old days from the busy Strand, through the slums of Clare Market, straight to the delightful peace and quiet of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Just outside the Clare Market Gate of Clement's Inn, in the alley, stood some curious tumble-down old curiosity shops, where, if you rummaged about, you might occasionally pick up a valuable book or an undamaged bit of blue China, either Oriental or Delft. Lucky the layman who in days gone by had the honour of an invitation to dine on a "gaudy day" in the old hall of Clement's Inn with the Benchers! It fell to my lot once, my host being that best of good fellows, John Anderson Rose, a solicitor, of Salisbury Street, Strand, who was a popular member of the old Arundel Club, and adorned our walls with priceless pictures and engravings, mostly by his friends Dante Gabriel Rosetti, Whistler, and Frederick Sandys. Rose was also the devoted patron and friend of that too-soon-forgotten genius W. G. Wills, who, I suppose, would be sneered at as a poet in these days of cheap and nasty mediocrity. But no one, so far as I can see, has noticed that Clement's Inn was the scene of the very earliest labours of one of our most distinguished dramatists and humourists, William Schwenk Gilbert.

Tucked away in the angle corner of old Clement's Inn, on the ground floor, were the chambers from which W. S. Gilbert gave his admiring friends his very earliest work. He had been a clerk in the Education Office, but the work was distasteful to him. His temperament would not brook dictation or control, as we all of us know by this time. Gilbert has often told me that when he broke away from 10 to 4 drudgery of the Education Office, he purchased a quire or so of blue foolscap paper, a packet of quill pens, and a few wood blocks, and commenced to fire away with pen and pencil, mainly for the comic papers. He had a small berth, in a correspondentship to a Russian newspaper, handed over to him by his relative, Sutherland Edwards, which caused either envy or awe to many of us in those days. The first person who took up W. S. Gilbert in those early and struggling days, was Mr. Maclean, a picture-dealer in Fleet Street, the first proprietor of *Fun*, to whom Gilbert *more suo*, topsy-turvy at the outset, used to send his contribution to *Fun*, and not through the ordinary editorial channel. The astute picture-dealer naturally saw great merit in Gilbert's work and insisted that it should be accepted. He was courteously, as a contributor, invited to the weekly *Fun* dinners, and I fear, from what I have heard, that at the outset the young writer was not very courteously treated by some of those who afterwards recognized his great talent to the utmost, and became his warmest friends and companions. Frank Burnand, owing to his novel, "Mokeanna," was promoted to *Punch;* H. J. Byron drifted into theatrical management, with an occasional comic paper—*The Comic News*—of his own; and the staff of *Fun* consisted of Tom Hood, our chief; Paul Gray, our charming cartoonist; W. S. Gilbert, our principal and best contributor; W. J. Prowse, with his inimitable and immortal "Nicholas;" Tom Robertson, the dramatist, whom I met at the club on the *Fun* meetings every week of my life for half a dozen years; but, alas! I am now

gravely informed by his cantankerous relatives that I never knew him or met him in the course of my life! Arthur Sketchley, with his Mrs. Brown; and for verse writers, the delightful Henry S. Leigh, Saville Clarke, and your humble servant, who has been writing bad verses for over thirty-five years, as has been candidly acknowledged by the vulgar young gentlemen and spiteful disappointed dramatists, who were not born or thought of when I went into training under the eye of my dear old friend, Tom Hood. I only wish they could write verses as good as were turned out in those days by Gilbert, Prowse, Hood, and Harry Leigh. But in these days, when Shakespeare himself is said to be no dramatist or poet, it is inconceivable that the old lyrists could have successors in Praed, Locker, Mortimer Collins, Prowse, or Leigh. Gilbert must have had a liking for the peace and quiet of the old Inns of Court, for he migrated from Clement's Inn to South Square, Gray's Inn, where he wrote and illustrated the best of the Bab Ballads.

On my daily road from Hoxton to the Strand in the year 1859, nominally to attend evening Civil Service Classes at King's College, but far too often, I fear, to sit at the back of the pit of the Strand Theatre to applaud Marie Wilton and Jimmy Rogers and Johnnie Clarke and Kate Carson and Fanny Josephs, then the drolls and stage beauties of the day, I imagined where I should like to live when the "ship came home." I always wanted to live, if Fate favoured me, in Barnard's Inn, Holborn, which always seemed to me to have such a monastic air, and into which I used to peep at night to see the hall and painted windows, and to enjoy the quietude of this dolls' house of an Inn; or at Garden House, Clement's Inn, always to my mind the most delightful *rus in urbe* in our mighty London; or in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where subsequently I made my nest in a top-story for a dozen dreamy and delightful years.

But Fate willed it that I should receive, in after years,

the warmest hospitality and most delightful welcome at Garden House, Clement's Inn, then owned by my dear old friend Moy Thomas, who like our companion Joe Knight retains the courtesy, the chivalry, and, may I add, the learning, and the extensive reading of the old school of literary men. Of Moy Thomas and Joe Knight it may at least be said—

One who never turned his back but marched, breast forward,
  Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;
  Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
    Sleep to wake.

No! at noonday in the bustle of man's work time,
  Greet the unseen with a cheer,
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be.
  "Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed—fight on, fare ever
    There as here!"

It was at Garden House that I met the devoted and lifetime friend of Moy Thomas—Dutton Cook, courteous and learned gentleman, clever novelist, and admirable critic, too soon forgotten, as we are destined all to be.

Close by the gates of old Clement's Inn stood, and still stands Carr's Restaurant, which, with an old sanded floor chop-house higher up in the Strand, opposite Somerset House, called the "Edinburgh Castle," was a great rendezvous for young and ambitious literary men, and the scene for the founding of scores of unprofitable papers. I think that my old friend, Ashby Sterry, and I, have, from time to time, written for more papers that started with steam and ended in smoke than any two men now alive. There was a time when Douglas Straight—now Sir Douglas Straight—ran us very hard, but he jumped ahead and left us pretty well where we were in the old days of Carr's Restaurant and the "Edinburgh Castle." At both places dear old E. L. Blanchard—and I don't suppose he was

very old then—was our guide and counsellor, and we never dreamed of eating and drinking anything without Blanchard's advice and *imprimatur*. Under his advice we would go to Carr's for a cut off the joint, and for a pint of a really wonderful "Beaune" that only cost a shilling (which, by the way, is still one of the popular features of this old established hostelry, and seems to be as good now as it was five-and-twenty years ago); then we would repair to the "Edinburgh Castle" to chaff John the Waiter, to whom E. L. Blanchard was very much attached, and to dine off "fired chops" and very old Burton Ale. But as I said before, both places were the scenes of amateur little clubs and the failures in newspapers. The most undaunted founder of unsuccessful newspapers I ever met was one always very kind to me, a good hearted, affectionate and excellent fellow, George Maddick of Shoe Lane, Fleet Street. His head was full of schemes that were to make fortunes for all of us. I can't say how many papers I edited for him (I know I was the editor of the *Court Circular* for many years when George Maddick was proprietor), and for how many more I wrote. But, alas! the fortune never came to him or to me. Still our intentions were admirable, if Fate did not favour us. Sometimes, but very rarely, the new paper was on the eve of success, and then George Maddick would promptly sell it. He was one of those, the thousands I was about to say, who "might have bought the *Daily Telegraph*." Dear me, how often I have heard that story!

In Ceylon.

THOSE who have ever enjoyed the hospitality of a planter on a tea or coffee estate are not likely to forget the cheeriest of welcomes from the best of good fellows. In Colombo itself, the port at which all the steamers—P. and O. or Orient—stop, there is much to be done and seen, temples to visit, museums to catalogue, gardens, zoological and otherwise, to admire. But, to tell the truth, the place is too hot for very much exercise, and it is only when the sun is setting—when, ten to one, there is a shower of rain, nay, a deluge, such as has never been experienced in any other part of the world—that you are apt to venture out without endangering your life by sunstroke. The principal hotels of Colombo are the G.O.H., that is to say, the Grand Oriental Hotel, near the Harbour and Post Office, and the Hotel on the Galle Face, which is the fashionable drive of Ceylon. But with most travellers the G.O.H. is the favourite rendezvous, while idling and loafing takes place under the corridors of the famous hotel. Hour after hour the guests, sprawling on long chairs, sleeping, smoking, and very often drinking, endeavour to get rid of the hottest part of the day. It is then that these lazy passengers, as they are called, are swindled in the most barefaced fashion by the Cingalese merchants, as they announce themselves, who profess to sell them wonderful bargains in sapphires, rubies, golden ornaments, and coarse lace manufactured in the country. The Cingalese men wear their hair very long, and is kept off their faces by the semi-circular combs which our little children wear at home, and what with their long black hair, the combs, the jackets, and long white petticoats, it is the most difficult thing to distinguish a man from a woman. Beware of these traders,

ye passengers of the future. Never believe for an instant that you will get a bargain from any of them. They will ask you £20 for a sapphire under the colonnade of the G.O.H., and at the last moment, when your steamer is just starting, you will be able to get the same stone from him for a sovereign. Before parting with your money consult the courteous host of the G.O.H., who is an expert in precious stones, or make your purchases at one of the shops, where you will get true value for your money.

It was at the G.O.H. that I had an adventure which is worth recording. The bedrooms at this Eastern Hotel are more like cubicles than bedrooms. That is to say, they are partitioned off, of course, but they are open at the top on account of the extreme heat. The consequence is that although the guests, when they have retired for the night, cannot see one another, they can hear without much difficulty, particularly any inveterate snorer. Whilst I was staying at the G.O.H., among the visitors was a very extraordinary young man. He could not have been more than six-and-twenty, and he must have weighed as many stone. He did more than snore. He trumpeted like a rogue elephant. He started with a diapason stop roar which changed into a bellow, and ended in a shriek. The champion snorer shook the thin partitions of every cubicle in our corridor. One night, when this entertainment was going on, and we were all alternately snoring or swearing, I heard, in the next cubicle to mine, a low and sweet murmur of complaint. It was a woman's voice, evidently the voice of a young, and to my imagination, a pretty woman. Every time the elephant man snored my next door neighbour gave a plaintive moan like a sick child in pain. At last, poor thing, restless and trying to sleep, she could stand it no more, and she murmured out in piteous accents. "Oh! who will relieve me from this awful calamity? Is there no man who will slay this Dragon?" The words, so close to my ear, seemed to be addressed to me personally.

"I will help you, poor lady," I whispered. "Trust to me." Whereupon I leaped out of bed, and turned into the corridor. There I found outside the snorer's bedroom three men attired in pyjamas sitting on the floor and roaring with laughter.

"This is no laughing matter," I said, chiding their levity. "But what do you intend to do?" asked one of these frivolous youths. "Do? why, stop it." "But how?" asked the *farceur* on the floor. "Follow me," I said, in a tone of authority. I tried the door, and luckily for me it was unlocked. We, the conspirators, all entered, and found this young mountain of flesh, this juvenile Falstaff, on his back, bellowing at the top of his voice. He was on a low, square iron bed. We each of us took one corner, and at a given signal we shook the bed. Had it not been for the mass in the middle, the bed, I am certain, would have been a wreck. But our labour was not in vain. The hideous noise stopped, and welcome peace reigned once more in the corridor of the G.O.H. We started back to our various rooms, and before I had time to cover myself over and close my ears lest the elephant man should trumpet again I heard the soft silvery voice whisper, "Thank you so very much. Good night!" In five minutes she also was in the land of Nod, and in ten minutes more the snorer was at his old pranks again. Next day I was naturally wildly curious to know who was my next door neighbour of the night before. You will grant that in the circumstances the curiosity was natural. I sought her everywhere, but in vain. She was a name and nothing more. All the public rooms and the verandahs and the terraces and the gardens of the G.O.H. were drear and dark. I drove out frantically to Mount Lavinia. All in vain. She was a voice and nothing more. I never could discover the mysterious lady. I could only conclude that she had sailed away in the early morning whilst I was sleeping or engaged in feeding the impudent crows which

in Ceylon come flapping at the window to steal the toast or the fruit that may be at your bedside.

About a year after I came home from my long journey, I was telling this story at the table of an old friend. When I had finished there was a pause. When the conversation went on again my partner whispered in my ear, "Can't you recognise the voice? 'Thank you very much. Good night.'" And then she laughed, "Why; I was the mysterious lady." And so she was.

When I was in Ceylon I received an invitation to visit one of Mr. Thomas Lipton's celebrated tea and coffee estates there. The one chosen for me was at Dambatene, a heavenly spot of country. It takes three or four days to accomplish the journey, but it is a delightful experience. You each have your Cingalese servant, usually a thief or a malingerer. He either robs you or feigns a shivering fever in order to be left behind or to be sent home again to Colombo. First of all, there is a long railway journey full of interest, as you pass innumerable "paddy" and rice fields and estates of every description. Your first stoppage is at Kandy or Newra-Elyia, a veritable paradise of lilies and roses, a place, by the way, where I interviewed Arabi Pasha, and made an effort for his release from his banishment to Ceylon, seeing that he was becoming blind and old and longed to be buried in Egypt, the home of his fathers. Starting from Newra-Elyia, with a relay of horses sent on, the journey up country began in good earnest. We took it turn and turn about to walk and ride, the servants carrying our baggage all the way on their heads. Each night we arrived at what is called a "rest-house," a kind of semi-hotel, supported by the Government, where you find a decent supper and a fairly comfortable bed. And so, without mishap or a drop of rain, except at night, we arrived safely at Dambatene, where the boys welcomed us most royally.

At this particular estate and at many others the tea is

plucked on the beautiful hills, and is manufactured miles and miles down below in the valley. In the old days it was the custom, when the tea—which requires the most anxious and delicate care in the plucking, three leaves and a bud—was gathered, to send it down to the manufactory by tortuous mountain paths, often very dangerous, except to the natives, packed on the heads of native bearers. But modern science has invented a far better arrangement. A wonderfully powerful wire connects the tea garden on the mountain with the manufactory down below. The tea when gathered is packed lightly and delicately into bags something like post-bags on the railway. These bags with rings are sent whizzing down the wire at a tremendous pace, and it almost makes you dizzy to see the bags dancing down, down, over forests, rocks, and rivers, until they arrive by sheer force of descent safe at the manufactory door.

In order to show how quickly tea is manufactured, I myself, when at Dambatene, picked some tea in the very early morning on the lovely mountain. I started the machinery that sent the bag whizzing into the valley. There it was dried, curled, and made into tea, a cup of which I drank from my own picking before I went to bed that night. The tea when manufactured is despatched in large bullock wagons to the nearest railway leading to the Port of Colombo, and it does not take long to find it in the shops and stores. It was thought at one time that the coffee industry had died out of beautiful Ceylon, but at Dambatene and other estates owned by Mr. Lipton the coffee is almost as successful as the tea. It was a kind of deadly insect of the phyloxera kind that ruined the coffee planter of Ceylon. But I cannot conceive a more delightful trip than to go up country from Colombo and then, on an estate, be right loyally entertained by one of the hospitable and busy tea planters. I should like to retire there now, and close the worry of my days in Ceylon.

Some New Years' Eves.

IT is New Year's Eve, 1896. All my life, until now, I have taken a holiday on New Year's Eve. I desired to be at peace at the end of this eventful year, and should have loved to get out of London, away from the desk, and to forget work and worry in the restful country. But Fate willed it otherwise this year. There was no running away for me between the morning after the dreaded Boxing Day and New Year's Day, and out of the 366 days of 1896 I don't suppose I have ever worked harder than on the 366th. No seaside this year for me; no leaning over the old farm gate listening to the church bells over the hills and far away; no pilgrimage to the dear old tower in the Garden of Sleep; no dreaming on the balcony of the highest hotel at Hyères among the palm trees; no silent hours of thought at Freshwater Gate, close by the winter home of the late Poet Laureate; no solitary experience in the heart of India, friendless and alone; but a New Year's Eve in work-a-day old London, with, thank God, a few dear and faithful friends around one and an old-fashioned bowl of punch, such as Charles Dickens loved to make—or brew—for I believe "brew" is the right word in connection with punch making. I must own that it has cost me many a sigh to be compelled by Fate and circumstances to end an old year in London and to begin one in the same place.

Discovered pen in hand on December 31st, 1896.

Discovered pen in hand on January 1st, 1897.

These are the stage directions in the comedy—or is it the tragedy?—called "The Wheel of Life."

* * * * *

To-day I was passing a familar corner of Oxford Street—New Oxford Street, as it is now called—the corner of a road that used to lead by many chapels to the disgraceful slums known as the Seven Dials, slums that have mysteriously escaped the renovating hands of the Metropolitan Board of Works and the London County Council. This particular corner of New Oxford Street, now a vacant site surrounded by a painted and decorated hoarding adorned with yellow candles and festoons of flowers, has some New Year's Eve memories for me. For here once stood Bedford Chapel, and here, once upon a time, there was a very dramatic service on the last day of the Old Year.

The Rev. John C. Montesquieu Bellew was a very picturesque London character. He ought to have been an actor, but Fate made him a clergyman. He had been a chaplain in India, where I think his eldest son, Kyrle Bellew, the actor, was born, and being extremely handsome he was the idol of the ladies both in India and in England. When I first knew Bellew—a very much misunderstood man, who suffered, as all lady-killers invariably do, from the little jealousies and the underwriting of men who cannot kill, and women who won't be killed—he was the vicar of St Mark's Hamilton Terrace, the living now held by Canon Duckworth. The ladies of St. John's Wood idolised Bellew. He was a scholar, a poet, and an orator. His sermons were more ornate even than those of Dean Farrar at the time that he, as a very young man, used to delight us boys sitting under him in the chapel at Marlborough long before he was headmaster, in the days when he had just come, full of honours and prize poems, from Cambridge, and always joined us in our games of football and cricket. Yes, both Farrar and Bellew preached Ruskinese, and the dear women—bless them—loved poetical sermons. Imagine a man with full, round face, rather dark in complexion, suggesting West Indian blood,

a fine form, bright intelligent eyes, covered with shaggy black eyebrows, and above this young face a marvellous head of hair, white as silver, and of the texture of spun silk. When Bellew was not spiritually advising the ladies of Hamilton Terrace and its vicinity, he was dabbling in spiritualism, and coquetting with hypnotism, anticipating the game of "willing," and reading from the poets at all the best literary institutions in London, out of London, and in the country, when he could get away. He was a magnificent reader, and taught people to believe in and admire Tennyson, Browning, and Hood. But, strange to say, one of his favourite authors was the long-neglected Crabbe.

A picture arises before my mind. There is a small island, overshadowed by trees, between Orkney Cottage, Maidenhead, close by the railway bridge, where I spent my boyhood's days, and "The Fisheries," then owned by the Lewises, over the way on the Berkshire side of the river. "The Fisheries" one summer was taken by Bellew, and the St. John's Wood congregation naturally came down to see him, as they could not exist very long without their poetical pastor. So they punted him over to the grassy island, where I have slept on many a sultry afternoon, and propped him up on scarlet cushions that showed up his wonderful white hair, and the adoring women lay and sprawled around him and listened to his grand voice declaiming Tennyson's "Guinevere" or Owen Meredith's "Portrait." Bellew's voice could have been heard as far down the river as Bray, and the very swans seemed to be attracted by it. I assure you that the scene was quite Eastern, with a touch of Buddhism and Siddartha in it. Some unkind people thought it was posing, but I afterwards discovered what a good fellow the "*poseur*" was. Between ourselves, I don't think that my father, who was a parson also, liked it at all. But then he considered he had a kind of claim to the river island on which the St.

John's Wood congregation had "squatted." So after all it might have been professional jealousy.

When Bellew left St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, he became the proprietor of Bedford Chapel, and might have stood for Thackeray's picture of the Rev. Honeyman. Here, on New Year's Eve, he gave one of the most sensational and dramatic services in all London. It was a kind of watch-night service, after the fashion of the Wesleyans. He gave a sort of dramatic lecture, rather than a sermon, warning the congregation that they were getting nearer and nearer to twelve o'clock. There he stood in the pulpit, watch in hand, with his flowing head of silver hair, surmounting a snowy white surplice, the surplice brightened up with a pale blue stole and a crimson Oxford hood. The women used to come out of the chapel sobbing, and the popular preacher would then go off to spend the early hours of the New Year with his friends, Edmund Yates, George Augustus Sala, or Edward Stillwell, who was, with his charming family, devotedly attached to him. Soon after this Bellew became a Catholic, and died, as he ever was, a good man and a true friend.

One of the last acts of this curious character was to invent a new entertainment, on which he prided himself. He hired St. George's Hall, and read the play of *Hamlet* in the orchestra, whilst behind him a series of dummy performers acted the play in dumb show without speaking a word. In fact, they illustrated the recital or reading. I regret to say the experiment, though well-intentioned, was a dreadful failure.

* * * * *

Now here is a picture of a New Year's Eve in India. You will remember that I told you I spent one Christmas Day in India at a hospitable club in Bombay. By New Year's Eve I had got as far as Agra, the lovely Indian city that holds in its heart that most glorious of created things,

that monument of divine love, that almost perfect gem of art known all over the world as the Taj Mahal. You all know the story of the Eastern monarch who uttered a solemn vow that he would erect the loveliest tomb in the world to the memory of the very loveliest woman who had ever inhabited the world—the woman who happened to be his wife. So he called the finest architects and designers and mosaic makers from Venice, then the centre of the civilised world, and he built the priceless monument known as the Taj Mahal. The original intention of this mighty Indian Prince was to build a marble tomb for his dead wife on one side of the river, whilst on the other he would build another for himself, the two tombs being connected with a bridge of silver. But death, the inevitable, put an end to this scheme, which began and ended with the Taj Mahal at Agra.

Those who have never seen how the purest white marble can be decorated and inlaid with coloured marbles of exquisite designs, designs such as I have seen nowhere else in the world, can have any conception what the palaces of Jeypore, Delhi, and Agra are like. Without such a climate, I presume, no marble temples would bear the attacks of time, for certainly the Taj Mahal looks as if it might have been built ten years ago. On New Year's Eve, 1892, I was favoured with the very loveliest day I had ever seen in India. There are three periods of an Indian day: the fierce, appalling, blinding light of mid-day; the exquisite rose tints and golden reflections of sunset; the violet glow of an Indian night.

At mid-day I found the Taj Mahal in a blaze of glory. So superb was the sheen of the white marble with the sun full upon it that I scarcely dared look up. You approach the Taj through cool arcades all glowing with decorative designs, then down a delicious garden with roses and sweet scented flowers on either side of you. Through the garden runs a clear rivulet of water reflecting the flowers that

seem to faint for the touch of it, and so, feeling infinitely small, insignificant, and paltry, you mount the white marble terrace that surrounds the whitest glory of all—the tomb of tombs. And then, burnt up with the heat and the glare, you enter the tomb, which seems as dark as night. What a glory of art! The marble gates of the tomb appear to have been carved out of ivory or alabaster. No one would conceive that marble could be the medium for such exquisite filagree work in mere design. And thankful of the cool, one wanders about and tests the mysterious echoes that seem to moan musically over the golden tomb in the marble monument. At sunset I went again, and the scene was more exquisite still. For, as you know, at the time of an Indian sunset the whole atmosphere is charged with colour, and these prismatic and rainbow hues are flooded upon the white marble tomb, which I may remind you is of gigantic proportions, bigger than any cathedral in the wide world. So that the tomb becomes blue, and green, and gold, and purple, and orange by turn. There is no more difficulty in looking at the glorious Taj. You cannot take your eyes off it, for there it stands, a softer white than ever, bathed in a kind of violet and golden glow.

And, to the astonishment of my friends, who wanted me to stay at the club and be jolly, I sneaked off between eleven and twelve, and drove straight to the Taj. It was an exquisite night, the blue sky studded with stars, and I had the Taj Mahal absolutely to myself. What an experience it was to wander in that garden close upon midnight, the air perfumed with scents, to see the stars reflected in the silent rivulet, and, entering the silent tomb, to live for half-an-hour among the echoes, calling on names most dear, thousands and thousands of miles away, and seeming to get an answer in the dead silence of this delicious night! They left me alone with the echoes, and here, absolutely alone, I sent back messages of love. Slowly the lonely minutes passed, and the year 1893 dawned whilst I was kneeling

by a marble pillar lighted only by a ruby lamp, which reminded me of the sanctuary. And this is the place peerless in its loveliness at moonlight, which the Goths light up with vulgar coloured lamps, and make hideous with the hiss of rockets and the glow of Bengal fires when kings and princes pass this way. No! No! The Taj Mahal at Agra "needs not Brock for beauty's heightening." It should be left severely alone by the pyrotechnist and modern decorator. For it is indeed one of the wonders of the world.

* * * * *

We are at Hyères of the palm trees, and it is New Year's Eve. In the early morning we drove over to Toulon and lunched at the favourite little restaurant on the quay, which, on a sunny day, reminds me of a bright "stage set" in a musical comedy. Here you have everything before you—soldiers, sailors, peasants, tourists, flower sellers, beggars, dogs, children, cyclists in rational dress, a broad pavement scattered over with as picturesque a crowd as anyone would care to see. In Cairo, as the crowds go by, there is a tragic solemnity in the picture; but here—Toulon—on the quay, with its restaurants, cafés, little tables, its eternal cry of "versez, versez," it is pure burlesque, French burlesque of the old pattern. Back we drive through the olive grounds and farms to dear little sleepy Hyères, with its convents, monasteries, and primitive life. There is time before dressing for dinner for one game of dominoes—see what a simple life we lead!—at the café where the diligences stop in the broad road that leads to Costabelle, the café where the only life in Hyères is to be seen, a life very amusing to me because it is so new. Elsewhere they bring Paris and London to the south of France, and you hear and see pretty much what you see and hear on the Boulevards or in the Park. But it is a different life altogether in the diligence cafe at Hyères les Palmiers.

Here, under our noses, we see the daily life of primitive France. So we make believe we have lived here for ever, and have never seen London at all, and we clatter the dominoes and play for "bocks" or chocolate, and chat to the pretty and courteous landlady, who never seems to leave the counter and the cheques, and are amazed at the card players, and wonder if life is not, after all, far happier here, with apparently very little work to do, and where all is friendship and brotherly love. Well, let us think so; at any rate, let us believe that this is a bit of Paradise we have not deserved, as we wend our way back through the dimly lighted streets in the darkening evening, under the huge palm trees once more, up the hill to the "Continental," and home again. After dinner, and the cigar concluded in the conservatory hall, we sit over a log fire and talk, and talk, and talk. It is nearing twelve, and we open the window. The night is lovely. The air is perfumed with roses and violets from the fields under our feet. There, over there, on the hill is the Church of the Miracles at Costabelle, and the moon is shining over the Calvary. Suddenly bells strike up from every church and convent and monastery. They are all in the little chapels, praying at the flower-laden altars down there. How pure it seems, how exquisitely peaceful! We cannot feel like this in London, where the bells ring also, and people kiss one another on the doorstep. Over the clashing of the convent bells the clock strikes out from the old cathedral tower that crowns this ancient hill. Wait till it is done! There, the old year has gone! Good bye. God bless you! And then there is a long and a delicious silence too deep for words.

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